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Australian PlayStation

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PLUS... CARMAGEDDON
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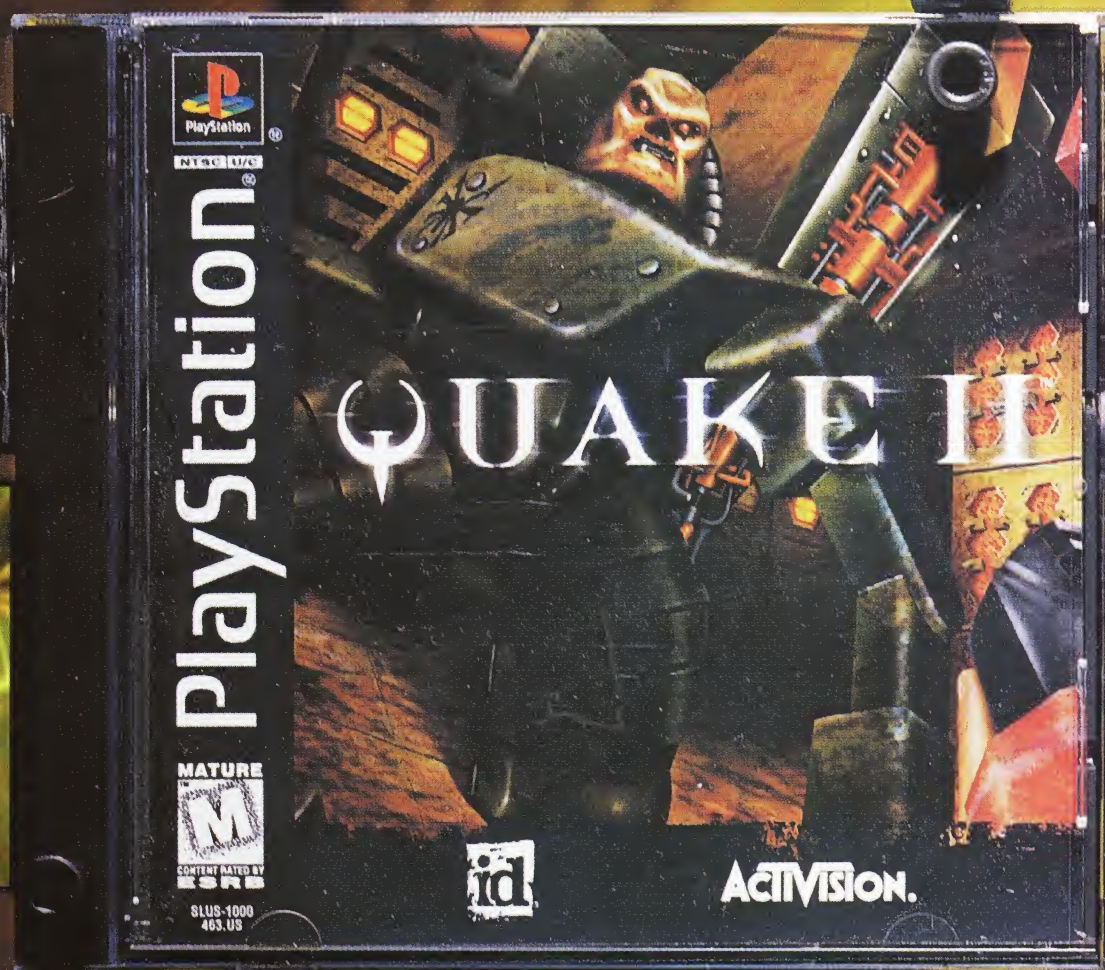
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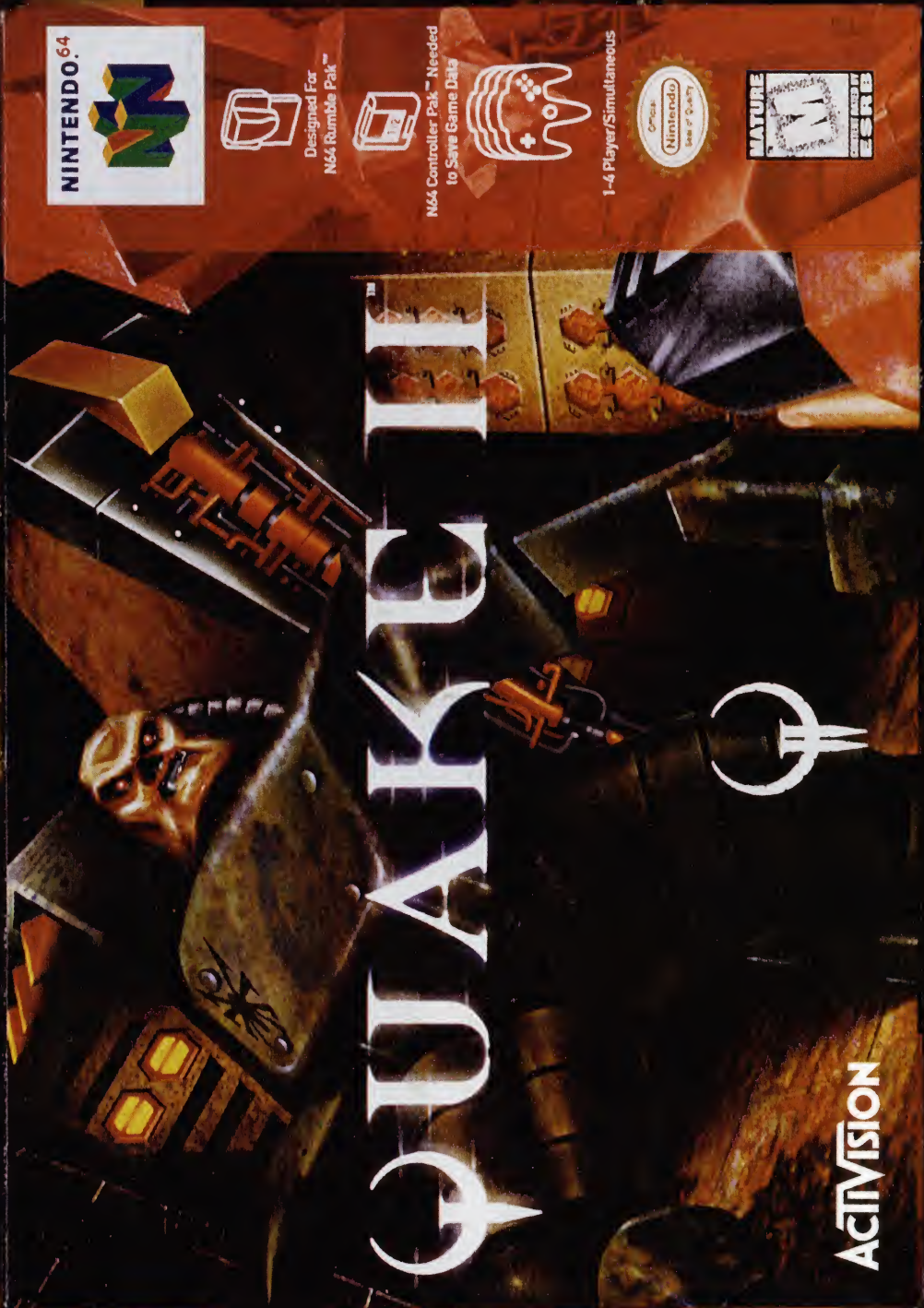
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A muscular tiger character with orange and black stripes, wearing blue pants and a red sash, is crouching in a dynamic pose. The background features a large, stylized circular pattern with a grid-like design.

Who you
callin'
a pussy?



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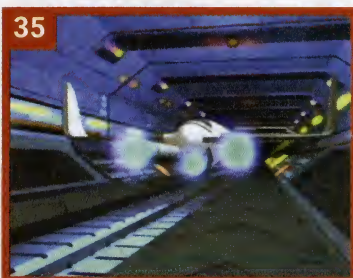
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Australian PlayStation

AUGUST 1999 ISSUE 04

PUBLISHED BY NEXT GAMING PTY LTD
78 Renwick Street
Redfern NSW 2016 Australia
ACN 085 430 646
ISSN 1442-0740

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PRINTED BY Wilke Color

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TELEPHONE 1300 65 0666
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Fate rewards the patient

This is the period where European and American developers have really come of age, producing games that have finally ascended to a level of quality that videogame fans the world over can be proud of. In particular, I'm referring to games like *Quake 2* (p.58) and *Driver* (p.74), which managed to surpass many of our expectations. The biggest surprise of all was Tony Hawk's *Pro Skater* (p.46), a kick-arse skateboarding game that has had at least one person playing it in the office every single day since it came in.

As far as many PlayStation owners are concerned, though, the wait never seems to end. If anyone hasn't noticed, there hasn't been a single game released in Australia from Squaresoft since *Final Fantasy VII*, which is quite disturbing considering that our American brethren have been playing such fantastic titles as *Einhander*, *Parasite Eve*, *Final Fantasy Tactics*, *Xenogears*, and *Brave Fencer Musashi* for the last year. To help you catch up on what you've been missing, and also to pay homage to one of Sony's most powerful allies, read up on our special feature: *The World is Square* (p.32).

The wait that's hurting the most, however, has got to be *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*. Sure, we've watched the movie several times, we've raided the

local toy shops, and we've even debated about whether or not the incredibly annoying Jar Jar Binks should get a lightsabre in the back come Episode 2, but what we're all waiting for above all else is PlayStation games, which have been delayed yet again! Well, let's hope they seriously put their heads down, because as we all know, movies generally make for extremely average games. *Street Fighter The Movie*, anyone?

In the meantime, *Australian PlayStation* will be continuing in its quest to bring you all the latest news about the best games on offer for the PlayStation. This month, we've got Australia's first hands on look at *Ace Combat 3: Electrosphere* (p.54), which looks to revolutionise its series in the same way *Ridge Racer Type 4* did for its own.

Also look out for our in-depth preview of *Shadow Madness* (p.84), an RPG by industry newcomer Crave Entertainment which has the potential to equal the quality of *Final Fantasy VII*.

Till next month, play hard, and don't let the waiting get to you.

KEVIN CHEUNG
EDITOR



UPDATE

PSX 2 RELEASE DATE ANNOUNCED

Let the Countdown Begin!

Sony of Japan have announced they will officially unveil the *PlayStation 2* and examples of its software at the coming fall Tokyo Game Show 1999, in Spring for us.

This particular trade show takes place between September 17th to 19th at the Makuhari Messe Convention Centre. Sony's president, Ken Kutaragi, has indicated that the console that will be put on display will be a prototype unit, but he refused to give any details as to what games will be put on display for the show.

As far as latest developments are concerned in production and launch of this machine, the *PSX 2*'s microchip, known as the Emotion Engine, will go into production in mid-July, but companies looking towards obtaining development kits will have to wait until after that before they can get one.

On a brighter note, Sony will be implementing a new laser reader into their system, making it capable of reading both CD and DVD formats. This is made possible through a new technology that produces a laser in both wavelengths suitable for reading the two formats.

Aside from that, whilst the timing all appears to be very tight, Sony are maintaining that they are aiming for the Japanese March 2000 launch.



▲ Those fantastic demos of Reiko Nagase will soon be a reality

UPDATE

ROLLCAGE EXTREME

The rip-roaring 360 degree racer gets a sequel

Early next year we expect the first sequel to Psygnosis' futuristic rally racer *Rollcage*. Shafted with the bland subheading *Extreme*, the new game will basically be the same as the old one, but with a few added extras thrown in for good measure.

To start with there will be twenty completely new tracks to race on. They must be working hard, because this is almost double the number of circuits in the original *Rollcage*. The tracks will cover a much wider variety of environments too. Six settings will

replace the previous four. One great addition to the new game is going to be the Stunt mode, in which players will be awarded points for flipping and tumbling from ramps and rooftops. It'll be interesting to see how well designed the Stunt area is.

Extreme is being programmed as more of a multiplayer game than the first game. Other modes include the Destruction Time Trial, Survivor mode, Multiplayer Tournament and even a Rubble Soccer game.

In the soccer game, debris from various demolished buildings is pushed around a playing field to score more goals. Knowing what the *rollcages'* handling is like from the first game, this sounds like a lot of fun.

The Destruction Time Trial involves demolishing as many buildings as possible as quick as you can. Not much is known of the Survivor mode as yet, but it probably resembles the deathmatches of the first *Rollcage*. We eagerly await more information on *Rollcage Extreme*.



▲ Stunt modes and a refined multiplayer mode is exactly what *Rollcage* needs



UPDATE

SQUARE'S PLANS FOR A NEW FINAL FANTASY

Uncertainty looms over its upcoming sequels

Documents leaked from within Squaresoft of Japan have sent every industry observer aflutter with the rumour that they could possibly relate to the design of *Final Fantasy IX*. Some sources even claim that personnel within Square's own development teams are referring to it as *Final Fantasy IX*.

Based on the designs and sketches shown on the page, it appears that this secret project looks nothing like the *Final Fantasy* the West is accustomed to. In fact, their super-deformed appearance and character classes bear a more striking resemblance to *Final Fantasy Tactics*.

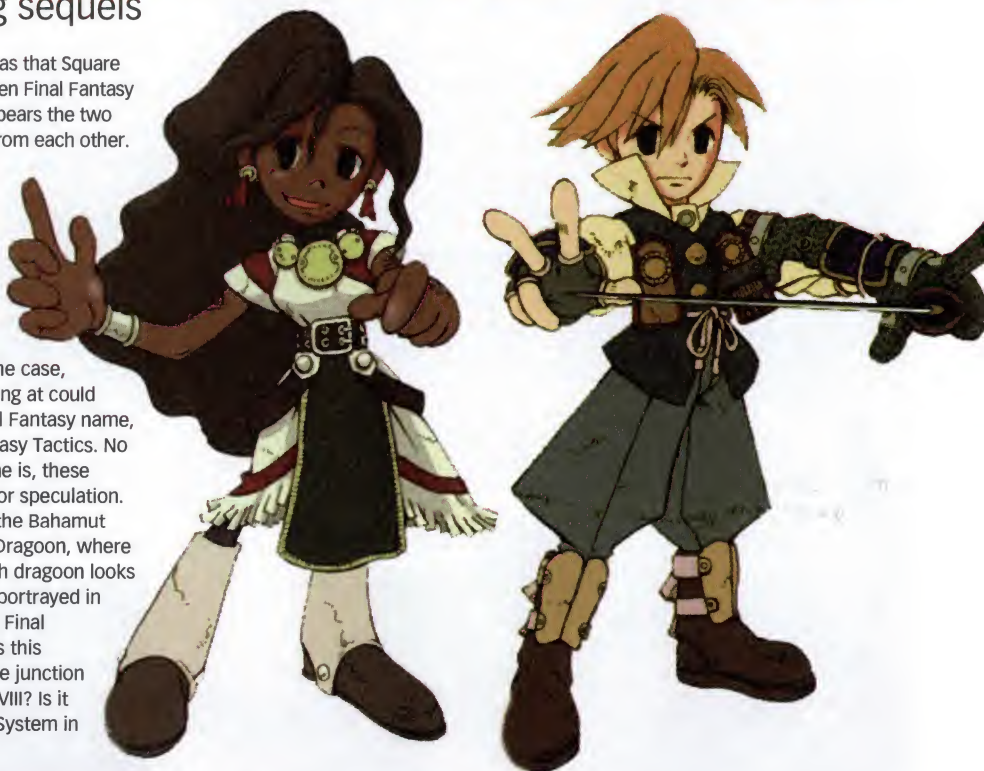
What is clear, is that the game does have something to do with the FF series. The rendered CG image of the airship is

the earmark of any of Square's *Final Fantasy* games. In our last issue, Square's Senior Vice President of Software Development and Character Licensing and lead producer for *Final Fantasy VIII*, Shinji Hashimoto, indicated FFVIII and IX were being developed concurrently under their two-line system of production.

The going theory was that Square would link stories between *Final Fantasy VIII* and IX, but it now appears the two stories will be different from each other. In a recent interview with Next Generation Online, Mr. Hashimoto indicated it is no longer even clear whether or not they (Square) will be calling the game *Final Fantasy IX*.

If this were to be the case, the designs we are looking at could be given a different *Final Fantasy* name, quite possibly *Final Fantasy Tactics*. No matter what the outcome is, these images are a goldmine for speculation.

Take the image of the Bahamut Dagoon and Leviathan Dagoon, where the armour worn by each dragoon looks exactly like the animals portrayed in the elemental attacks of *Final Fantasy VII* and VIII. Does this signify an evolution in the junction system of *Final Fantasy VIII*? Is it an extension of the Job System in *Final Fantasy Tactics*?



▲ The air ship pictured above is one of many things that point towards a *Final Fantasy* game. The question is, how does it tie in with the new character designs?



RELEASE DATE UNCERTAINTY

In spite of all the debate and rumour that is circulating about the new *Final Fantasy* game, Square themselves have been less than decisive in how they have tried to control the situation.

Digicube, one of Square's subsidiaries and retail outlets, had confirmed that *Final Fantasy IX* would be released in March 2000 for PSX, which concurs with what Square reps revealed to Australian PSX at E3 last month.

However, in a rather unexpected move, Square of Japan allegedly ordered Digicube to remove any and all evidence of *Final Fantasy IX*'s rumoured existence and release date to be removed from their website. What is meant to happen from here on in is really just a matter of waiting and seeing what develops next.

SQUARE: MISSING IN ACTION IN OZ?

Those of you who have read this month's feature, "*The World is Square*" will be concerned about what is going to happen to the Australian release of FFVIII.

The distinct lack of Squaresoft titles being released in Australia can be attributable to many factors, the main one being that of confusion surrounding an exclusive distribution agreement held between Electronic Arts and Squaresoft.

Even though Electronic Arts have assured us that they are making efforts to locally distribute *Parasite Eve*, it has been finally clarified that the distribution agreement applies only to the United States.

Square themselves have opened up an office in Europe to cater for the PAL market, and Sony Australia have assured us that the release of *Final Fantasy VIII* will not face the same complications as less fortunate games like *Einhand*.



UPDATE

LUNAR: SILVER STAR STORY NOW IN ENGLISH!

The classic Sega RPG gets a PlayStation release

After much fuss and delay, the highly anticipated RPG known as *Lunar: Silver Star Story* has finally been released in English in the United States. The game originally appeared on the ill-fated Mega CD, and is amongst one of the most popular RPG series amongst fans of the genre.

Australian PlayStation was fortunate enough to be able to get its hands on a copy of the game to bring you its initial thoughts on the game.

From what we have played of the game so far, the game will be an absolute joy for anyone who's into the old-school form of role-playing games. *Lunar: Silver Star Story* is a combination of simply exquisite 2D artwork, gorgeously animated sequences, and an excellent translation courtesy of Working

Designs, who made sure the numerous instances of voice acting were performed to the utmost perfection.

At this point in time, there aren't any plans to bring *Lunar: Silver Star Story* to Australia yet. Working Designs, based in the United States, have committed themselves to translating the game's sequel, *Lunar: Eternal Blue*; and they are also the company responsible for translating *The Adventures of Alundra* into English.

Whilst *Alundra* was quite a good game, it is often perceived as a knee-jerk reaction to the sudden realisation of distributors that RPGs actually have a market in Australia. It is not known what kind of attitude will be taken up with *Lunar: Silver Star Story*, but it is certainly hoped it will be a favourable one.



▲ *Lunar Silver Star Story* takes on a traditional 2D RPG appearance, with gorgeous 2D backdrops and meticulously detailed character sprites



▲ The *Lunar* series is famous in RPG circles for its exquisite animated sequences



UPDATE

KONAMI SUES OVER BEATMANIA

The battle for music supremacy gets legal

Konami of Japan have indicated their intention to commence legal proceedings against Japanese developer, Jaleco, for patent infringement.

Konami, a company that turned itself into a household name through innovative music titles like *Beatmania* and *Guitar Freaks*, alleges that Jaleco have infringed the patent held over the *Beatmania* arcade machine.

Details are sketchy as to the nature of this patent, but it seems clear that the issue surrounds Jaleco's own arcade machine, *VJ: Visual and Music Slap*, and its similarities to the *Beatmania* machine. Konami intend to seek remedial damages for this infringement, as well as an order for the removal of Jaleco's machines from all arcade centres in Japan. The results of such a lawsuit will be of great

interest to all major videogame developers in Japan, given that Konami have a virtual monopoly over the music genre. Jaleco will, in all likelihood, challenge the validity of Konami's patent as its main form of defence.

The case will therefore probably hinge upon how Konami's patent is construed, and whether or not the components of its music games are sufficiently novel and innovative.

A Konami official said: "We have twice issued warnings to Jaleco concerning VJ's infringement on the patents, but have not received a convincing or reasonable response from the company. If the matter is left unresolved, we will incur heavy losses."



▲ Believe it or not, Konami have music games for guitars and drums. What's next?

Jaleco maintains that there is "no evidence the company had infringed on Konami patents," but reserved any future comment until after they have had the opportunity to examine Konami's statement of claim in full.

Considering that Konami has taken this course of action in relation to *Beatmania*, it might be worth considering the new dance pad they have for *Dance Dance Revolution*. Jaleco have released an equivalent arcade machine using their own 'Stepping Stage' dance pad.

MINI NEWS

Namco, the maker of games like *Ridge Racer Type 4* and the upcoming *Ace Combat 3*, has released its earning figures for 1998 in Japan, showing a profit of 7.5 billion yen, as well as unveiling its development plans for the 1999 fiscal year.

Although the company made a profit of 7.5 billion yen, this figure is 7.5 percent lower from the previous year. The loss has been attributed to the recent slump in the Japanese economy and the arcade market. In the next fiscal year, Namco intends to develop 12 titles for the PlayStation and PlayStation 2, as well as titles on other platforms.

At last, a decent music game that isn't made by Konami or Enix and doesn't star a wafer-thin dog. If anyone's tired of the ritual of waiting for a beat to fall squarely on a point, *PacaPaca Passion* might interest you. What you are required to boogie away on top of a stack of vinyl discs.

While it's obvious this game was largely inspired by games like *Beatmania*, *PacaPaca Passion* comes off as clean, original, and having a distinctive flavour of its own. The game is currently doing the rounds in the arcades, and it's certainly an indication that with enough creativity, any company can get into this genre.

In light of Konami's present position in relation to Jaleco, it will be interesting to find out what Konami thinks of this game.

Hideo Kojima, the creator of the *Metal Gear* series, has reportedly confirmed that the sequel to *Metal Gear Solid* will definitely be appearing on the PlayStation 2.

He said that the console would be powerful enough to reproduce the world of *MGS2* that he has envisioned in his mind. Insiders at Konami nevertheless maintain that the sequel will appear on the PlayStation. More news as it comes.

WHITE WATER RAFTING ON PSX

Yet another odd game genre surfaces in Japan

The new ideas just never seem to stop coming out of the Japanese game developers. One of the newer unexplored genres in videogames to be tested is white water rafting, which a small developer going by the name of Fujimic has undertaken to do all by itself. With its first title going by the name of *Bakuryu*, its premise is simply to navigate your way through fictitious yet perilous waterways.

Whilst *Bakuryu* is still quite early in development, it would be foolhardy for anyone to realistically think that it will enjoy any measure of 'blockbuster success'. Its ideas, however, do present some potential



to the market in the new area of gaming it is attempting to chart.

Already, the PlayStation has already seen games like *Notam of the Wind*, which simulates hot air balloons; and *Rock Climbing* which simulates - you guessed it - rock climbing. Each of these games have enjoyed some form of cult status amongst those who are keenly interested in the sport.

With Tecmo's *Gallop Racer* series about to be launched in the United States, which is designed to service the highly positive feedback of Western audiences towards the possibility of a horse-racing game, it's quite possible that *Bakuryu* may end up on Western shores after all.

UPDATE

PSYCHIC FORCE 2 IN DEVELOPMENT

Japan's most popular arcade game finally comes to the PlayStation

Although *Psychic Force* never actually made it to PlayStation, it looks as though its sequel will be making an appearance soon. Fighting fans and anime freaks alike should be well pleased to hear this considering the nature of this space-age beat 'em up.

Developed by Taito, makers of *Bust-A-Move* and *G-Darius* series, *Psychic Force* is staged in large cube-shaped arenas. It offers a different style of gameplay to the likes of *Tekken* and *Streetfighter* due to the fact that the combatants fly around each other.

It seems like an airborne *Destrega* with *Evil Zone*'s Japanese influence thrown in for flavour. The two fighters zoom around shooting fancy projectiles from afar and resorting to fisticuffs when they get close enough to punch and kick.



The anime shines through in the character designs and the Zuntata musical score goes with it quite well. As with all good fighting games it is said to be easy to grasp but difficult to master.

There is even a plot. Set a couple of years after the first *Psychic Force* game, the story follows two main

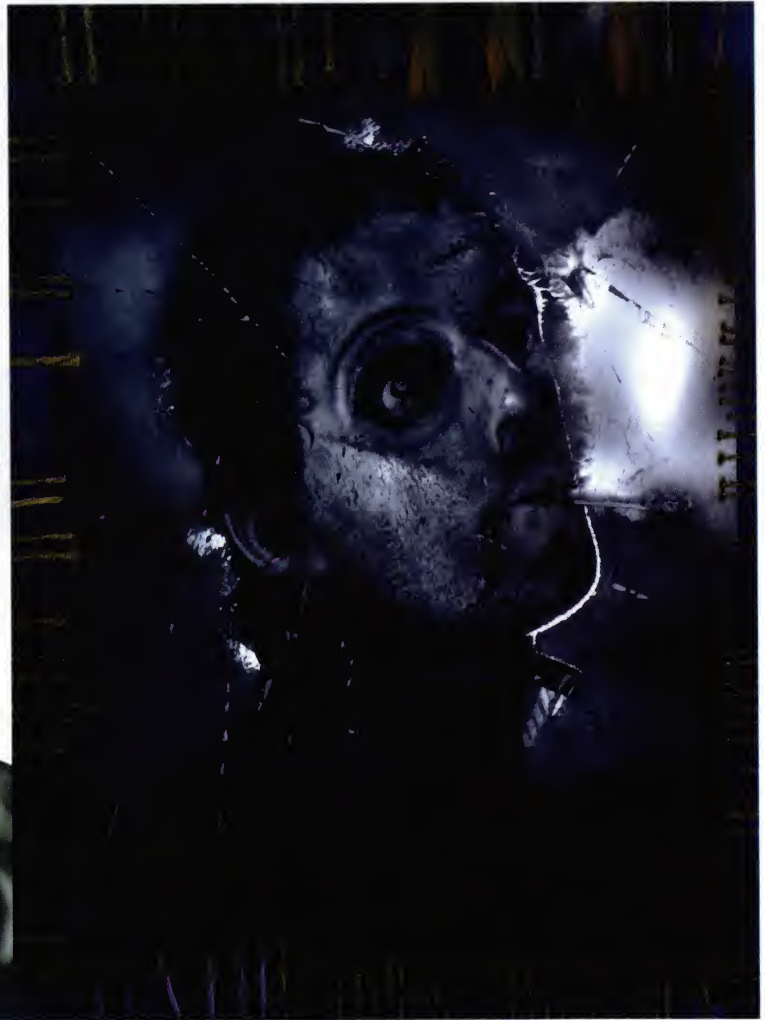


▲ Spectacular mid-air battles are the main drawcard of the *Psychic Force* series

groups in a battle for supremacy. The Neo Noa have declared war on humanity and the military has organised a group to counter this attack. And then there are some other parties who just want to be part of the action.



It is going to be PocketStation compatible when it comes out later this year. Players will be able to customise fighters and build their strength, on the bus! We're keen to see a PSX version of this game and we'll keep you up to date.



UPDATE

G POLICE 2: WEAPONS OF JUSTICE

When words don't work, you need guns to do the talking

Coming soon to a PlayStation near you is the highly anticipated sequel to *G Police*. Subtitled *Weapons Of Justice*, the game will live up to its name, sporting nearly double the number of offensive weapons than that of the first *G Police*.



Highlighted among other improvements is the addition of new and wildly different crafts to comander and new styles of missions to accompany them.

Players will be able to pilot the good old Havoc hovercraft and Venom airship, but they have both been tweaked in the name of better control. Some will recall the Havoc as difficult to come to grips with. Well, you guys are in for a shock, as the new Havoc will be even more finicky with newly implemented strafing ability for starters.

Other new vehicles emerge for other missions. The Corsair is a space vessel, developed for orbital dogfighting.



▲ The killer sci-fi effects that created the *Bladerunner* atmosphere in the first game has been retained for this sequel



The Raptor is a ground bound vehicle on legs. It was designed with land based assaults in mind and has been constructed to walk in all directions, including sideways and up steep hills.

Other improvements in the visual department include a superior sense of distance. By implementing a new technique in which buildings are outlined with a wire frame in the distance, the player gets a sense of where things are before the fully texture-mapped image of them appears before them. This way the PlayStation saves its limited RAM for upping the frame rate and executing spunky special effects.

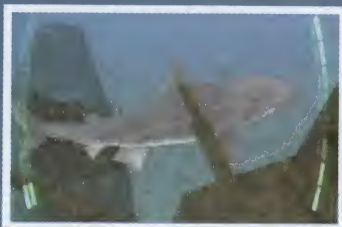
The missions will be set in a wider range of environments, like canyons and other natural settings, to justify the use of the new vehicles. We will keep you posted on further updates concerning this hot sequel.

AQUANAUT'S HOLIDAY

A most unlikely underwater sequel ever

Aquanaut's *Holiday* was, perhaps, one of the lowest-key releases there were in the PlayStation's line-up of games. However, the subtlety of the game's beauty did not escape the eye of many a discerning gamer, which is why this sequel has been created.

Brought to you by Artdink, the same highly acclaimed developers of innovative games like *Mr. Domino* and *Carnage Heart*, *Aquanaut's Holiday 2* promises to be as beautiful an exploratory game as ever before. Using new dithering methods and more efficient calculations in the programming, Artdink will be able to produce some rather spectacular underwater effects.



▲ Lighting effects and reflective mapping make this dolphin a treat to look at

UPDATE

OMIKRON

Out of France comes a rather unique title

The French haven't been renowned around the world for their videogame programming prowess, but nonetheless there are a few developers in France who believe they can make their mark.

Quantic Dream is one such bunch of computerologists and lately they have been designing a new PlayStation game called *Omikron: The Nomad Soul*.

With a title like that one wonders how it could be a bad game. Hinting at a solo warrior adventure game with gothic elements, *Omikron* brings Crystal Dynamics' latest horror fest *Soul Reaver* to mind, but it looks like *The Nomad Soul* will be a whole lot more than just killing the undead.

The fundamental premise underlying the game's main thrust is unlike any concept we have ever heard of in a game before. Instead of

controlling a main character, as in almost every other



game ever made, the player assumes control over a, you guessed it, nomad soul. That is, you don't actually have a physical form until you jump into someone else in the game.

Luckily you begin the game within a large and densely populated city, so there are plenty of ripe fruits for the picking. All you have to do is choose a body to possess and away you go, in the tangible form. If that person should die due to your incompetence, your spirit will automatically be transferred back to the last body you occupied.

Needless to say, this great gameplay idea leads to countless possibilities. Each personality in the city will be an individual, from their polygonal make up to their attributes and abilities.

Commonplace problems and puzzles presented in the game will undoubtedly have multiple solutions thanks to the chance to adopt different characters at will.

Depending on who you possess and when, different paths will be opened up to the player at different stages in the game.

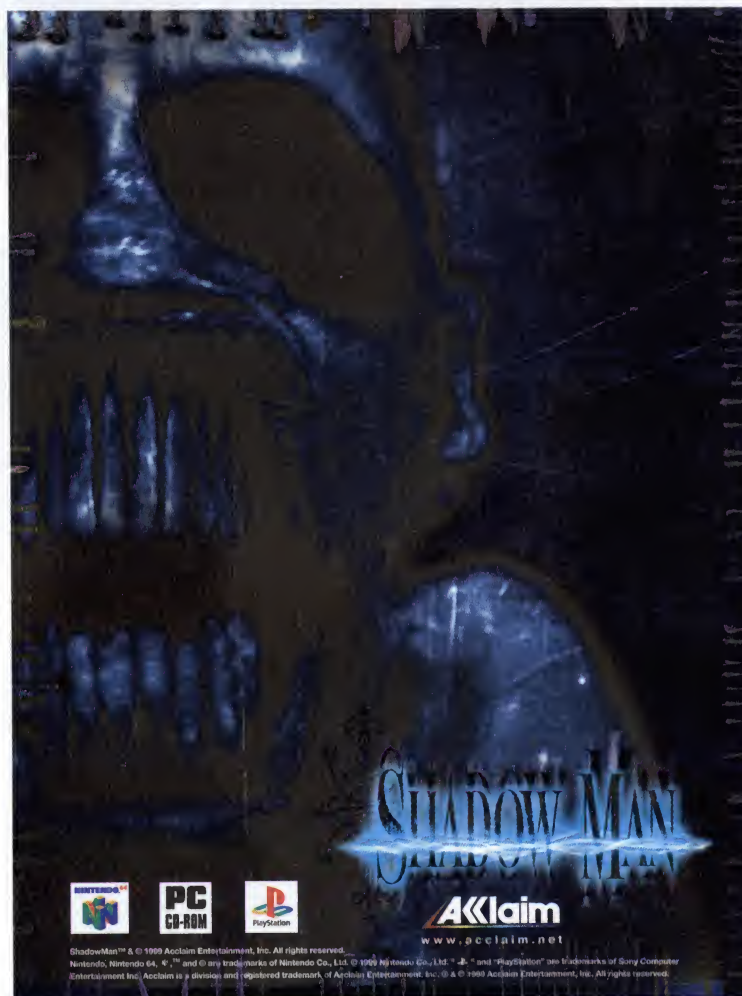
Quantic Dream have covered their bases as far as the plot is concerned, having planned out an extensive historical chronicle of the city and its land. However, even though the game has a strong storyline, the action is based on combat.

The people you possess will all have certain strengths and weaknesses when fighting, and the chance to fight will crop up regularly throughout the game. Weapons will also come into it, but the main focus here is on hand to hand combat.

Eidos are currently financing the project and will eventually publish the game upon completion. When it comes out here early next year, Ozisoft are most likely to distribute it locally. We can't wait!



▲ Looking like a scene out of *Small Soldiers*, *Omikron* hopes to impress with its plot



UPDATE

RPG FANS PREPARE FOR DEW PRISM

New details on the action RPG

In what appears to be an act of paying homage to its gaming roots, Square of Japan are releasing a slew of new RPGs that hark back to the old-school gameplay of its original blockbuster titles like *Chrono Trigger* and *Secret of Mana*.

Games like *Xenogears* and *SaGa Frontier 2* are a clear indication of this. Square's latest announcement is that their newly-released RPG, *Legend of Mana*, will come packaged with a demo of a new action RPG they have in development, known as *Dew Prism*.

Dew Prism looks as though it will continue the

new tradition that has been set by the comical *Brave Fencer Musashi* in providing a smart combination of 2D and 3D graphics along with cute character designs.

Dew Prism will be an action RPG produced by the same team that produced *Secret of Mana 2*, *Chrono Trigger*, and *Xenogears*.

You choose one of two characters at the beginning of the game: a boy named Rue or a "former queen" called Mint. The game unfolds differently depending on who you choose.

Both characters, however, are searching for a magical item known



as the *Dew Prism*. Rue seeks its power in order to resurrect his sister, who was killed 3 years ago by a mysterious stranger; while Mint, on the other hand, intends to use the *Dew Prism* to overthrow her younger sister's claim to the throne and take it for herself.

Dew Prism is set for a Spring 1999 release in Japan. We will keep you posted on any developments beyond that.



SEQUEL FOR EVERYBODY'S GOLF

Get ready for more goofy golfing action

Sony Computer Entertainment have revealed their development plans for an upcoming sequel to last year's unlikely hit, *Everybody's Golf*. Tentatively titled *Everybody's Golf 2*, the production of this game is being fueled by its immense popularity in Japan and the United States (where it is known as *Hot Shots Golf*) in the 1998 period.

All that is clear at this stage in development is that Sony intend to do everything it possibly can to improve the game without damaging the quirky nature of its original gameplay.

Obviously, the graphics being employed in depicting the golf courses are much more detailed; and much effort has been made to improving the visual interface in terms of club selections and so on. It would also appear that Sony have thrown in a few extra camera perspectives from which the action can be viewed, such as close-up and panoramic.

No doubt, news of the development of this game has pleased the legions of fans already garnered by the original game. With any luck, this game will also find its way to Australian shores to find a place amongst the niche tastes of Aussie gamers.



▲ *Everybody's Golf* was one of the biggest sellers worldwide last year



MINI NEWS

One of the newer adventure games in Japan is *Maria 2*. Early screens indicate that this game is an adventure game not unlike most other PlayStation games of the same type, except the storyline revolves around a biological and toxicological conspiracy, which somehow involves the main character.

Playstation 2: NDL's NetImmerse 3D game engine will be available for assisting development of PlayStation 2 titles, SCEI has confirmed. NetImmerse's engine attempts to cut development time significant periods of through its comprehensive set of software tools. SCEI's Shinichi Okamoto was quoted as saying,

"NDL's NetImmerse is an important component of our middleware program, which is designed to make the next-generation PlayStation a great development platform. NetImmerse will allow developers to complete their titles much faster and take advantage of all of the power of the next-generation PlayStation."

New details have been released concerning the upcoming *Final Fantasy Movie*. The following is a list of some of the acting talent who will be lending their voices to the movie:

- ALEC BALDWIN
(*Hunt for Red October*, *Shadow*)
- VING RHAMES
(*Mission Impossible*)
- MING-NA WEN
(*Mulan*, *Street Fighter*, *Joy Luck Club*)
- JAMES WOODS
(*Contact*, *Casino*)
- DONALD SUTHERLAND
(*JFK*, *Backdraft*)
- STEVE BUSCEMI
(*Fargo*, *Reservoir Dogs*)
- PERI GILPEN
(*Frasier*)

The movie is currently being developed in sunny Honolulu, Hawaii, and is set to be released in early 2001.

UPDATE

KONAMI UNLEASHES ITS ANSWER TO DUKE

3rd person blasterama, anime style

Ever wonder what the Japanese think of a distinctly Western character like Duke Nukem? Well, this might give you something of an idea.

Brought to you by KCET, the Tokyo division of Konami of Japan, *Gungage* is a game appearing to borrow many concepts seen in the game Duke Nukem: A Time To Kill, and places them in the context of an adventure more to Japanese tastes.

Gungage puts you in control of one of several selectable characters, most of which can only be unlocked later on the game, and requires you to run through the streets of your local town whilst blasting seven shades of shinola out of invading aliens with your trusty ray gun.

Much to the delight of some of the crew of Australian PlayStation, the absolute futuristic level designs and outrageous physical feats that our heroes can perform are quite reminiscent of recent anime hits like *Spriggan* and *Ghost in the Shell*.

For Konami, a game like *Gungage* is a little out of place at this particular time.

Most of its resources are being focussed towards arcade development, particularly in the genre of music games where titles such as *Beatmania*, *Dance Dance Revolution*, and *Guitar Freaks* continue to dominate the charts.

Its other major titles under development are anticipated RPGs like *Suikoden 2* and *Vandal Hearts 2*. Nevertheless, as far as this month is concerned, *Gungage* takes a peculiar place beside *Rising Zan*, a similar game based on an even more ridiculous premise of a samurai gunslinger.



▲ *Gungage* is just like Duke Nukem: A Time To Kill, but with a little extra flare

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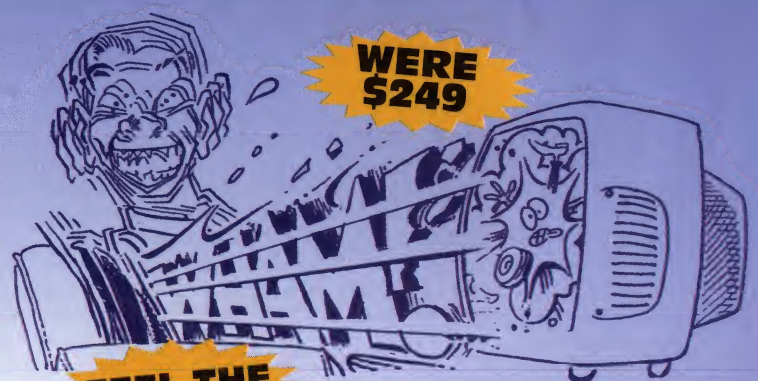
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PERIPHERALS

RACE STATION SHOCK 2

The *Race Station Shock 2* is the latest in steering wheel peripherals for the PlayStation by Guillemot. Whilst it won't realistically break any records for innovation, it does have the distinct merit of being sturdily built and competitively priced (\$AUD109.95), which is a lot more than what many other equivalent products can boast.

The *Race Station Shock 2* features Negcon and Dual Shock Analogue compatibility, and has two independent motors built into the wheel itself to create a good sensation of vibration feedback. A foot pedal unit plugs into the back and has a sturdy interface for acceleration and brakes.

The truly noteworthy feature of this steering wheel, however, is that the incline and length of the steering column can be adjusted to your liking. Ergonomically speaking, this makes the wheel great for sitting comfortably in your lap, but the extent of incline isn't great enough to simulate a 'real' steering wheel.

That, perhaps, is the product's main fault: that in trying to be innovative with the adjustable column, it doesn't go far enough. On balance, however, the *Race Station Shock 2* is a fine wheel that should be placed in consideration should you choose to purchase one.



MEMORY STATION TRIO

When it comes to 3rd party peripherals, one of the oldest industry jokes is that if you think you've got a way to make money with memory cards, you're certainly welcome to try. Why? Well, because it's generally difficult to compete with Sony's standard memory cards, and multi-page memory cards don't have the best track record for performance.

Imagine our surprise when Ubisoft sent us a package containing Guillemot's latest memory card offering: the *Memory Station Trio*. The pack contains three standard memory cards of different colours.

These cards function in exactly the same way as Sony's standard memory cards, and have a capacity of 1 meg, which is the usual 15 blocks that the majority of us are accustomed to.

But here's the clincher: the pack of three only costs the equivalent of one of Sony's standard memory cards. That's right, it's only \$AUD29.95.

A little mental arithmetic should tell you that this is a fantastic package. Now, we've tested these cards for ourselves, and there's amazingly nothing dodgy about them at all. We are not going to ask how these babies have been priced so well, but it's obvious that if you're looking for new memory cards, this is the package to get.



THE ADRENALIN RUSH OF AN ERA

DRIVER



DRIVER
REFLECTIONS

**As Seen
On TV**



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Australia Pty Ltd



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at \$329.80 each consisting of: 1x Super Racer Joy stick, 1x Quake II game, 1x Tai Fu game, 1x Guardians Crusade. 8. Winners will be notified by mail and results published in the October issue #6 of Australian PlayStation magazine on sale September 1st, 1999. The promoter is Next Gaming Pty Ltd ACN 085 430 646 of 78 Renwick Street, Redfern, NSW, 2016. TP Pending.

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FEEDBACK



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I HATE CENSORSHIP AND I HATE LARA

Heya everyone at the AUPSM
 I've just got a few points to put across here so listen up. Now for starters, all this crap about Lara Croft. SHE'S A COMPUTER GAME CHARACTER!!!

There is a difference between a game and reality. Some of those blokes out there had better get a quick grip on reality 'cos I'm getting a bit bored by with the constant "how do you get the Nude Raider cheat to work?".

Now I'm not saying that sex doesn't sell, judging by the strong reaction Lara has made, it's obvious that it does. Nor am I saying that it SHOULDN'T, game producers and developers have every right to put all the tricks they have up their sleeves to sell their games just DON'T get so obsessed with a chick that doesn't exist.

Secondly, I would like to have my say on game censorship. This is probably your 6 billionth letter on this topic (the last two issues had at least three letters that I can remember nagging on about this) but I wanna have my say.

Anyway all I have to say on this topic is this: NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF THRILL KILL WASN'T BANNED! Seriously, if you look back, there probably wasn't a single letter before Thrill Kill was banned regarding this topic! Although I don't really agree (but I don't really disagree) with this decision, it's not really our choice and although this choice SHOULD be ours to make, the censorship people did it for our own good. I don't wanna see a 10 year watching his dad or older brother win a battle and have his character have an orgasm, it's just not right.

Even if Thrill Kill was reconsidered and not banned, a large percentage wouldn't be able to play it! All this hype about it has started something terrible! There are children under 10 arguing that it shouldn't be banned! Personally, I think that's just horrible!

P.S. Will Lupin 3 The Castle of Cagliostro come to Australia? (Please say DANG for no and WOO HOO for yes.)
 Thanks for your time,

Tim Heylen



▲ Even though there was a brothel in FFVII, nobody got upset about it. So why are people so upset over a little blood splilt in a car game?

Sorry to have to cut you short there, Tim. Censorship is a pretty complex issue, and the situation is made much worse for people like yourself when the politicians and moral crusaders who push for hard-line censorship lack a proper understanding of the entertainment industry in general terms.

For instance, some people got upset over the portrayal of a brothel in Final Fantasy VII, even though it was placed in its proper context.

Thrill Kill, the other hand, was a fairly blatant attempt by the developers to bring publicity to themselves. It wasn't too crash hot a game anyway, so you're not missing out on anything huge. And Lupin 3? Make that a Dang.

A PLAYSTATION 2 SKEPTIC

Howdy People,
 I love your mag, it's better than all the other ones. I was wondering why 'Hideo' comes up when you play Metal Gear Solid. It comes up just before you fight one of the bosses.

I thought the disk might have been faulty when I hired it out, but my friend brought one and it did the same thing. Can you please tell me why it did this? Is it part of the game, or did I miss something when I was reading the print?

And what the hell is this I hear with the PlayStation 2 not having any modem in it? Come on, does this mean we have to use that old Link Cable again where no-one can afford having 2 PlayStations and 2 TVs? I heard you can buy one for it but it means another \$143 for a 56k modem and the PlayStation 2 is dear enough as is.

The Dreamcast sounds much better to me than the PlayStation 2 does. I

heard that it has got much better 3D graphics and it also has a modem. Back me up.

Tell me something better about the PlayStation 2 and make me want to buy it. Tell me it's got a modem, tell me it's got better 3D graphics. Tell me please.

Travis Rooth



FEEDBACK

The PlayStation 2, according to the latest specs that have been made available, will easily outperform anything the Dreamcast will come up with. 20 million polygons per second as compared to 3 million.

300MHz CPU clockspeed as compared to 200MHz. 32 megs of direct RAM as compared to 16. A 3D rendering chip that has all of the effects supported by the Dreamcast's Power VR2 chip and more, such as Bezier curves. This in itself should reduce the most ardent Sega zealot to tears. As far as the modem is concerned, no final plans have been made yet, so there's hope.

Regarding the 'Hideo' screen in Metal Gear Solid, that's actually your cue to change your control pad from port 1 to port 2 in order to defeat Psycho Mantle with relative ease.

FINAL FANTASIA...

Dear PlayStation Magazine
Firstly, I would like to say how much I like your magazine. I was really impressed by your May issue mainly because of your fantastic feature on Final Fantasy VIII. My brother got a different PlayStation magazine and it had a feature on FF8, but it didn't even come close to yours.

Your review of Ridge Racer Type 4 was great. I like the looks of the Gran Prix mode and as soon as I read this, I wanted to buy the game. But when I saw what you gave it for difficulty, I was having second thoughts about buying it. I was wondering if it is worth buying it even if it is a bit easy.

Also, could you please tell me how to get out of the castle in Wild Arms? What I mean is, when the princess' father dies, and the guards won't let you out, how do you get out of there? Keep on making these great mags because it helps me and my family decide which games to buy.

Shaun Sanford

Ridge Racer Type 4 is unfortunately too easy for its own good. You can literally finish the game in a day. Mind you, the mechanics are fantastic, but it's lack of longevity means that it's only suited to extreme die-hard fans. As for Wild Arms, you have to sneak out of the castle without any of the guards seeing you. It takes a little practice, but it's worth it.



▲ Final Fantasy VIII: we've played the Japanese version, and it rocks pretty hard. We could give you the full low-down now, but we're going to wait till we see an English version before we do that

CLONAGE? WHAT ME WORRY?

Dear People,
I am a regular buyer of your mag and I love it, especially the demos. Anyway, I will get straight to the point, I was reading another mag yesterday and it had a segment on how systems/companies bring out games. In one part of it, it said if a company brings out an adventure game for the

PlayStation, someone would have to bring one out for the N64 to keep up.

That is a really dumb thing for companies to do because the first company spends years on a game and it's good in the end; and a second company makes one in a month and it comes out as a crappy frustrating game.

Something like this has happened recently:

Konami spends a few years on Metal Gear Solid and it turns out to be the best game on the PlayStation, then Koei brings out Winback, which has been in development for about a minute,



▲ Don't put Tekken 3 in the same classification as Carmageddon and Resident Evil 2

LETTER OF THE MONTH

IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH CENSORS?

Game ratings are stuffed. I know it. Why? You ask. Because I've rented Tekken 3. Nothing out of the ordinary. But the rating on it is MA15+. It contains 'medium level violence'.

What bothers me is the fact the a game like Clock Tower gets a rating of M15. For those who don't know, this means anyone can purchase it. They 'recommend' you're over 15. The game is about a psycho that one day lost it and used a big pair of scissors to cut people up. He chases you while you're finding strung up bodies here and there.

Well, out of the two games I'd consider Clock Tower to be the most violent and disturbing. I can't see a game like Tekken 3 offending anyone at all. If the OFLC get disturbed by bloodless games- fine.

Don't put them in the same classification as Carmageddon or RE2. Doing this only limits the sale of copies. It doesn't matter what you guys say, a high percentage of gamers are under the age of 15. I just wish more people knew this.

Ashley Lawson

A very poignant observation, Ashley, and it's one amongst many that haven't caught the eye of many a videogame observer. You have wonder how some of the processes in the classification process works: it's not good to have red blood, but it's okay to have green blood.

Six months later, it's okay to have red blood, just as long as you're mowing down zombies. And as you've pointed out, it's okay for kids to play a game where they get terrorised by some psycho who decapitates people; but by the same token, these kids can't watch a bit of biff that's no more harmless than watching the WWF pro wrestling. Go figure.



FEEDBACK



and from what I can see it is nothing compared to Metal Gear Solid.

What the companies need to realise is the need to spend more time on games and make them original, not just a copy of a game on another system.

I also have a question, in issue 6 of your mag, there was a letter from K. Cheung talking about, well I don't know, I didn't read it. But anyway, is this the same guy from your mag? And if he is, did you hire him after reading his letter? That's all from me.

P.S. What's the best time you have finished Metal Gear Solid? Mine is 3 hours 15 minutes.

Cale Schmidt



▲ Metal Gear Solid will be the inspiration for many clones to come



▲ Street Fighter - the original 2D fighter that's been cloned to death already...

Kevin here. Yes, I was indeed the angry sod from issue 6. At the time I was writing for Hyper magazine, and I somehow found my way into this magazine. Believe you me, considering what I wrote in that letter, the irony is not lost on many of us.

At any rate, the lack of originality in certain games, or 'clones' as it were, isn't a case of one system copying another: it's game developers on any system who are borrowing ideas from each other.

That's why you tend to get so many clones of Street Fighter, Tomb Raider and so on, which turns the market into a slush of mediocrity. Just about the only thing that is left for you to do about this is to let your wallet do the talking. Permanently.

If you're not sure what to get, you need only come to us for help. At Next, we make it our business to provide you with the most comprehensive guide to the videogaming scene.

COOL NEW CROSSBREED!

I love it!! I just love this great new mag, which as it seems, is a wicked cross between "Official Australian PlayStation Magazine" and "100% Unofficial Playstation Gamer". This cool new crossbreed has all the goodies of the others, like reviews, hints, cheats, competitions, guides and more, with a great new flavour of reading for itself.

Here's my story, I had just got home from school to receive the 20th Official Australian PlayStation Magazine only to find the words 'THIS IS OUR LAST MAGAZINE'. In disappointment, I thought "does this mean I'm going get ripped off in my subscription?". But no way! In fact a bonus. Today as I hold this mag I'm thinking, "great job, keep it up."

See Y'all later

Mr Happy Man

Thanks for the feedback Happy Man! It's good to know we're keeping the fans happy.

FEEDBACK

MOVIE GAMES

I have a great idea.

Wouldn't it be great if there is movies based on video games. I think there is a movie about Tomb Raider coming out someday. Wouldn't it be great if there is a movie about Metal Gear Solid? Imagine Solid Snake running around with a Nikita Launcher blowing things up.

It'll be great if Tekken 3, Gran Turismo, Time Crisis, Ridge Racer Type 4 and many other great games had turned into movies. Imagine the Tekken 3 cast fighting on the huge screen in the movies or a guy buying cars going into the races or that guy from Time Crisis going into an adventure. It could happen.

P.S. Which is better the Jogcon controller or the analog controller?

Anonymous Queenslander

You are not alone in fostering such thoughts, but a quick scan of the shelves of your local video store will reveal the danger of such dreams given flesh.

The movie versions of Super Mario Bros, Double Dragon and Mortal Kombat were all dogs. The sequel Mortal Kombat Annihilation was the worst film I've ever seen. The anime version of Tekken was appalling, but this is no reason to abandon hope.

The upcoming CG movies of Tekken and Final Fantasy look to be fantastic, so perhaps the lesson here is that translating a video game into a movie is a dangerous practice, sometimes best left alone.

ANOTHER SATISFIED CUSTOMER

Dear Julie and the Next Gaming advertising staff,

Thankyou very much for forwarding on my steering wheel and extra gifts. It was nice to see that someone finally took the time to find out what had happened to my prize, and the extra gifts such as the ToCA 2 game are greatly appreciated. I received the prize on Wednesday by courier (at exactly the right time!) and is working perfectly.

Please pass on my thanks to the rest of the Australian PlayStation team. Thankyou.

Jonathan Bell



▲ Whilst the Phantom Menace is available on PC, the PlayStation version's been delayed again, much to our dismay

Our largely under-appreciated advertising staff were absolutely stoked to receive your letter, especially Julie, who has got it pasted up on her wall!

GETTING CONFUSED WITH THE FORCE

To the folks at PlayStation Magazine, I'm sure you guys have already got heaps of letters about Star Wars - The Phantom Menace, but I just wanted to ask about the new PlayStation games that are

being released on it. When is it coming out? You guys had a great preview on it last month, but The Official PlayStation Magazine had a review, so I'm a bit confused about what's going on. Oh, and May the Force be with you...

Don Cherry

The release of the Star Wars games on PSX has been delayed because Nintendo managed to buy themselves a short exclusivity period on the game.



We actually chose not to review it (and instead preview it) basically because at the time, the game was nowhere near completed, and looked quite poor.

That's why other magazines have chosen to use PC screenshots in their reviews. Our policy is not to review anything until there is something complete and we have played it for ourselves.

2D FIGHTING FANS ARE STILL THERE

Dear Australian PlayStation, I loved your Lords of the Ring feature, it's nice to see some people who actually know something about fighting games for a change.

One thing I did note, however, is that you didn't say anything about 2D fighting games. How could you do this? 2D fighting games are the backbone of

where the genre is today. Imagine how things would be if there was no Street Fighter or King of Fighters.

Well, now that that's off my chest, what's the deal with Bushido Blade 2? I loved the first game to bits, but I've heard lots of bad things about the sequel. Keep on tonkin'

Master Fighter

If anything, Australian PlayStation has some of the most battle-hardened old-school fighting game fanatics in its fold, and you can rest assured that they will never let 2D fighting games be overlooked.

The point of last issue's feature was actually to focus on the '3D fighting games' in the market. As for Bushido Blade 2, the game is hardly worth getting excited about.

Just imagine Bushido Blade 1 with prettier graphics, but with less weapons and two thirds of the moves taken away.



▲ Uhh... we don't remember this scene being in the movie, but what the hey

FEEDBACK Q&A



You have the questions and we have the answers. Don't know when the South Park game is coming out? Wondering why this mag seems so familiar? Need to know more about distributors, developers, publishers and programmers? Just send your queries to:

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Q Hi Everyone.
 I am a fan of horse racing games.
 1. Do you think Gallop Racer 3 will be released here? If so when? Do you think there will be any other Horse Racing Games released?

2. Have you heard anything on South Park yet, like when it is coming out?

3. Will there be any Rugby League games coming out? There are rugby union, soccer, hockey, tennis, etc. games out but there are no rugby league games. Thank You

Adam Smith

A 1. Gallop Racer 3 (as it is known in Japan) will be released in the USA as Gallop Racer. There is a good chance it will come out down under at the end of the year. The horse racing genre is uncharted waters for the industry, so there's no telling if there will be any other horse racing games.

2. We saw bits of South Park at E3, but it's still pretty much knee-deep in development. We will keep you posted on this one.

3. Rugby League games have been tried before on PC and older consoles, but they didn't work out too well. EA can always be relied upon to try Aussie sports like AFL, but at the moment, they don't have any league-related plans. They might change their minds in future though.

Q Howdie all,
 First of all, I would like to say that there IS A NUDE CHEAT FOR TOMB RAIDER 3!!! Now how many people have been writing in asking if there is one? I was getting so sick of it that I just had to write in and tell you guys about it. You need an Xplorer cheat cartridge and it only works on the first level. No, I'm not going to tell you what it is, so don't get your hopes up. She's a sex symbol used to sell the games. Der!

Scott West

A NO, NO, and for the last time, NO! There is no such thing as a nude code for Tomb Raider 3! And anyone who uses an external implement to alter the colours within Tomb Raider 3 is in serious need of a social life.

Q Hi everyone at AUPSM,
 I am 11 years old and have owned a PlayStation for a year and a half. I think your PlayStation mag is great!!! Now down to business, I've got some questions to ask you...

1. Is Crash 3 better than Crash 2 and 1? If so, why?
2. Are there any cheats for Final Fantasy VII?
3. Should I get Final Fantasy VIII or Gran Turismo 2?

Thanks heaps

Michael Fraser!

A 1. It's much better than Crash 1 and 2, basically because it offers different forms of gameplay to make life interesting. Instead of running through one level after another, you get to ride around on bikes, fly planes, skuba dive, jetski, and so on.

2. Yes, there are plenty of cheats available for FFFVII.

3. It depends on whether or not you are a fan of RPGs or driving simulations. Realistically, you'd be wanting to get both because they'll both be great games.

Q Hi, your mag is great and I wanted to know why would you make a Sony PlayStation 2? Many people would get peed off if they had to buy another Sony system to play games they wanted. I also have some questions:

1. Can you use cheats in every single Sony game?
2. How many people have to buy a game before it goes Platinum?
3. Can you get any Nintendo 64 games on Sony?



▲ To this date, Final Fantasy VII remains the most epic adventure the PlayStation has ever seen. And people are still looking for cheats...

4. Why are the games so expensive? I get \$20 a week and it would take me 4 to 5 weeks to buy a good game like Metal Gear Solid, Abe's Exoddus or Apocalypse.

5. Is it true that there is a memory card that has 120 blocks on it?

Otherwise, the PlayStation is the best thing yet to me.

Matthew Norman

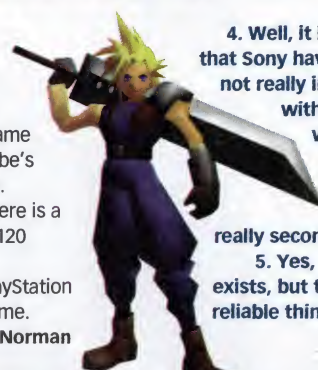
A 1. It's not guaranteed that a cheat can be used in a game. Some games are specifically programmed with cheats, while others require a little brainwork and puzzle-solving.

2. According to Sony, a game has to be in the market for 6 months and sell 500,000 copies worldwide before it gets the Platinum rating.

3. Most of the time, no. Only third party developers make games for PSX and N64, and they have decided not to develop for the N64.

4. Well, it is the pricing system that Sony have in place, and we are not really in a position to argue with it. That is basically why we are here: to make sure you do not waste your hard-earned cash on a really second-rate game.

5. Yes, such a memory card exists, but they are not the most reliable things in the world.



Q G-day coppers and shielas
 As you know I collect your fantastic mags and I would just want to know a couple of answers to my numerous questions!

1. Will there be Pokemon coming out on the PlayStation?

2. Will there be a Time Crisis 2?

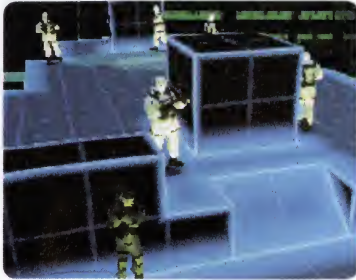
3. When is the exact date for the Pocket PlayStation to be released in Australia (and also New Zealand) and how much will it exactly cost?
 Thanks a lot for reading!

Dustin Michael

FEEDBACK Q&A

A 1. No. Pokemon was created by that other company, Nintendo.

2. Time Crisis 2 is already in the arcades, and whilst it has been rumoured that it will be brought to the PlayStation, Namco have made no confirmation of such a project. If it is coming to the PlayStation, it will most certainly be a watered-down version of the arcade original.



▲ With Metal Gear Solid having set the benchmark for spy action/adventure games, where does a game like Syphon Filter sit?

3. The PocketStation was originally scheduled for a September release, but the latest rumblings we have heard are that it might not be released in the Southern Hemisphere at all. We'll keep you posted.

Q Dear Q&A,

I think your mag is the best on the planet. I have bought every issue so far and now I'll ask some questions:

1. I own MGS and I think I've done everything. I have finished the difficulty levels, gotten the bandanna, stealth suit and camera. In VR Training, I got first in gun shot mode for every stage and mission. I know how to get Meryl in her undies. Is there anything else?

2. In your June issue, you said that there will be an upgraded MGS with a new CD containing 300 extra VR missions. When will it come out and will you be able to buy just the extra CD?

3. When is Syphon Filter going to be released, and will it be better than Metal Gear Solid? Is Tomorrow Never Dies going to be better?

4. Is Rainbow 6 out on PlayStation? I can't find it anywhere.

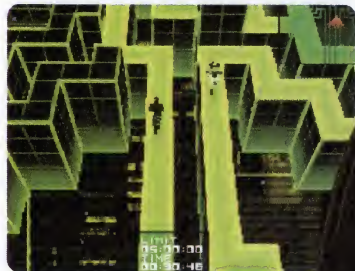
5. I heard that Final Fantasy 6 is much harder than Final Fantasy 7.

ASZ

A 1. Hmm... At the end sequence where you ride off with Meryl into the horizon, you can actually finish the game so that you ride off with Otacon into the horizon.

2. Metal Gear Solid Integral has only just been released in Japan, and it'll be released in Australia and New Zealand towards the end of the year under the title 'Metal Gear Solid: VR Missions'. Whether or not you can purchase the expansion CD separately is still up to question.

3. Syphon Filter should be out in the shops as we speak. It's a great game in its own right, but it's not fair



to compare it to Metal Gear Solid because they are completely different games. It's better described as Tomb Raider with balls. Tomorrow Never Dies is still in beta form, so we won't comment yet.

4. Rainbow 6 isn't out yet. That might explain why you can't find it.

5. Final Fantasy 6 is a much harder game than Final Fantasy 7, which is a pity because it's only available on import on the SNES.

Q Dear Australian PlayStation,

1. I am a big fan of Squaresoft RPGs and I'd like to know when Parasite Eve is coming to Australia?

2. Are you still going to have your reader art section?

3. Are there cheats available for FFXII?

4. Can you please publish cheats for Tomb Raider II? Can you please print a cheat book?

5. When will we get a FFXIII Demo?

6. In the last issue, in the FFXIII preplay, what does "music is still PCM" mean?

7. In your last 2 issues of Australian PlayStation you've published an ad for a cheat hotline and under PlayStation titles it says: Chocobo Racing. Is this something out of Final Fantasy VII?

8. Is there going to be a Final Fantasy VIII Helpstation?

9. Medieval was much too easy! It only took me 6 1/2 hrs to finish!

Thank-you for answering my questions.

Kaitlyn

A 1. The last we have heard, EA are still negotiating over the distribution rights in Australia.

2. Unfortunately, no.

3. There are many cheats available on the internet, however the game is quite old now.

4. Next Gaming (the division we work in) actually produces a magazine devoted entirely to cheats and playguides called Complete PlayStation Solutions, and they have covered Tomb Raider 2 extensively.

5. Not for ages. The game hasn't even been translated to English yet!

6. It means that the music is made from computerised MIDI files. Such music sounds

electronic, as opposed to being fully orchestrated.

7. Chocobo Racing is a new racing game by Squaresoft, starring Chocobo (who also happened to be in FFXII).

8. There most certainly will be, as soon as the game comes out.

9. Well, most people only get to play with videogames for around an hour a day, so it really depends on how hard-core you are.



Competitions

ALL AUDIET
COMPETITIONS CLOSE
ON MONDAY 10TH OF
AUGUST 1999

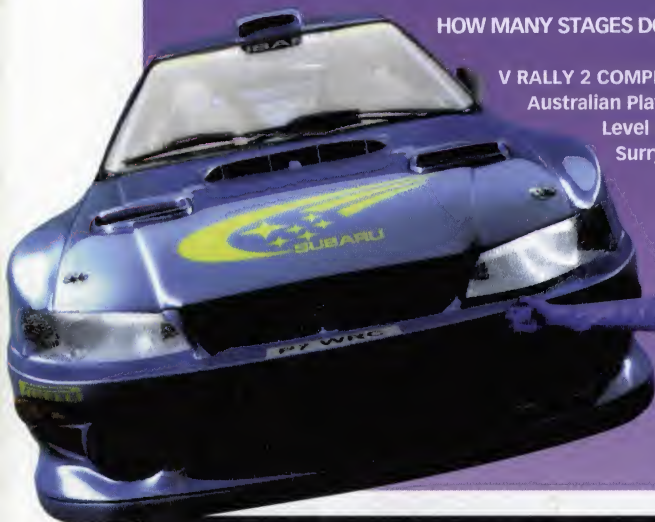
V RALLY 2

Win the ultimate rally car experience!

Keen to get your hands on the best rally car game the PlayStation has ever seen? Well, the generous folks at Ozisoft are letting us give away 5 copies of this fantastic title. To put yourself in the running to win this fantastic game, all that you have to do is write in to us and answer the following question:

HOW MANY STAGES DOES VRALLY 2 BOAST?

V RALLY 2 COMPETITION
Australian PlayStation Magazine
Level 6, 418a Elizabeth St
Surry Hills NSW 2010



DRIVER GIVEAWAY

Terrorise streets of downtown America!

GT Interactive have given us 5 copies of this superb game to give away. To put yourself in the running to win one of these games, all you have to do is write in to us and answer the following question:

WHAT IS THE JOB OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN DRIVER?

Put your name, address, and answer on an envelope and send it to:

DRIVER COMPETITION
Australian PlayStation Magazine
Level 6, 418a Elizabeth St
Surry Hills NSW 2010



SOUL REAVER WINNERS: Emily Ranek (Qld), Brett Harler (WA), Chris Hudson (VIC), David Sullivan (NSW), and J.P. Hayes (NZ). **PLATINUM PACK WINNERS:** Colleen Lambert (NT), Andrew Lim (NSW), Liam Cary (NSW), Anna Cabral (VIC), and Henry Lang (NZ).


STAY  TRUE™




ALL SHOES DIE.

**THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS MAKE SURE
THEY DIE A SLOW LINGERING DEATH.**

The Chany Jeanguenin signature shoe.



The World is SQUARE



SQUARESOFT are gods in gaming. They are responsible for continually creating unique titles in an industry that is riddled with clones. Their products are always of the utmost quality, in whatever genre they choose to invent. These are the games which have yet to be seen in the Southern hemisphere.

Squaresoft have been the most prominent pioneers in videogaming ever since the days of the NES. No other developer has been so thorough, so meticulous with their programming, or so courageous in their experimentation with new fields of gameplay.

They are one of the few teams who truly polish their games to perfection to create playable games for everyone to enjoy. To this day they still have over one hundred full-time game testers in their employ to ensure that their products are glitch-free. In truth, they can be attributed with the re-invention of the role-playing genre as we know it.

Role-playing games used to be played by be-spectacled nerds, using their imagination in the school library at lunchtime to visualise abstract concepts like Hit Points and physical states attributes like strength, agility, charisma, and so on. To these 'nerds', such games were absolutely scintillating, providing them with an incredible alternate universe to trip into at any time.

Square were the absolute first to pick up on the popularity and potential being offered by this as yet non-existent role-playing genre. They were the first to recognise that an invented universe would prove irresistible to many millions of people across the globe.

They also realised that this type of game would work even better in an electronic medium. In videogame form, they could present all of the goblins, dragons and distressed damsels with boundless and beautifully animated illustrations.

IT'S HIP TO BE SQUARE

Since then, Squaresoft have consistently set the pace for the industry to follow. Their record of PlayStation RPGs alone is more impressive than Sony's own line up.

Thanks to Square, the PlayStation appreciates many unique titles across a broad range of genres. Many of them don't even fall in any category because they are so far ahead in terms of innovation.

Their developmental history is untarnished. From the smash hit RPG *The Secret of Mana*, which squeezed the Super Nintendo for all it was worth to create a game that required at least 70 hours to finish (yes, on the SNES!), to the incredible *Final Fantasy* series which began way back on the NES, Square have been the world's most prominent entity in the realm of role-play.

FAIR AND SQUARE

So, having established the fact that these guys are gods of their time, questions are raised concerning the local publication and release of many of their games.

Countless titles of theirs have yet to see the light of the Australasian sun. Games such as *Parasite Eve* and *Brave Fencer Musashi* offer the present-day PlayStation owner a completely new, but by no means difficult to grasp, approach to gaming altogether.

Many of us at the office have played through them and enjoyed

them thoroughly every step of the way. Unfortunately the local distributors of Square titles don't appear to be as RPG-minded as the rest of the planet, hence the lack of local publication as yet.

Even sadder is the vicious circle that these late game releases spiral down into. The longer that these titles go unpublished here, the more they will get pirated and the less of a market there is left for them when they finally end up getting a local release on our shores.

Thus, the longer that we wait, then the less likely the game will come out at all. This is why we have decided to write this article on just how smashing and fabulous ALL of Square's games are (except for perhaps *Bushido Blade 2*), so that they may receive some of the recognition they so deserve.

Here is a list of games that Square completed, some as far back as three years ago, that have still to be recognised as viable sellers in the Australasian region.



Parasite Eve

Parasite Eve was finished in 1997. It is a modern RPG thriller, based on a book that has previously been made into a film in Japan. Unlike so many RPGs and horror-themed games to date, Parasite Eve actually has a worthwhile and enthralling storyline.

THE INNER EVIL

We are all animals according to scientific classification. We are made up of many millions of cells, each of which houses a nucleus and some funny helpers we call mitochondria.

Modern scientific theory has it that these mitochondria have been evolving at a more rapid rate than us humans. Modern scientific theory could be right.

The plot begins as Aya Brea (a New York Police detective and the main character you play) attends an opera concert with some daggy male escort. They end up being the only survivors of a terrible bout of spontaneous combustion among the audience members halfway through the show.

It all seems to have something to do with the singer on stage - the one that doesn't go up in flames when all her colleagues are screaming balls of fire. Eve, her name is, and she is a link to the distant past that only the ancient mitochondria inside us can comprehend.

You see, it's just their way of breaking out. They don't mean to hurt people exactly, they just wanna be free. Their accelerated actions, now that they are no longer dormant after countless aeons,

causes such concentrated heat at a cellular level that the poor host body tends to catch on fire.

With 2D bitmap backdrops it resembles Resident Evil and swims in a similar sense of horror survival. However, in accordance with Square's gaming trademark, the game has strong streaks of role-playing elements.

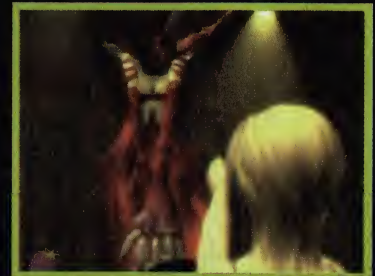
Aya has Hit Points and Parasite Energy, both of which increase gradually during the six days of her adventure. The parasite energy acts just like Magic Points in any other RPG. The more enemies she defeats, the more abilities she obtains to do with her mysterious energy.

The fighting system is unique, sort of like that of The Secret of Mana on the SNES. You remain free to run around during the battle, but you cannot exit the screen to escape.

Once you have attacked a foe, a little bar will start to refill, preventing you from attacking again until it has reached the top. It is supposed to represent your fatigue, and depending on what weapon you have equipped this bar may take a long time to refill.

Apart from the obvious reasons, plenty of subtleties also grant this game special attention.

It is also Dual Shock compatible and the analogue stick can be then be used to manoeuvre Aya around in the game. When she is attacked by any of the monsters, a gentle shake in the controller lets you know about it.



There is heaps to this game, from weapon upgrades at the Police Firearms Division to the many Parasitic abilities she acquires.

It's all done in a very sharp fashion, with beautiful 2D bitmap backdrops all the way and horrible monsters which scare you out of your skin.

Anyone with a few million dollars to spare would make a buck or two if they decided to bring this out in Australia. We've hyped it up before because it is worth the hype.



Einhänder

Einhänder is the best shooter on the PlayStation, bar none.

G-Darius, Raystorm and even R-Type: Delta could all go jump off a cliff if *Einhänder* were to be released here in their wake.

Another fine example of just how well the PlayStation can handle the full 3D in high-res at twice the frame rate of television broadcasts, it is visual bliss.

It is much faster than all other space shooters seen on the PlayStation. The explosions are more realistic too, both visually and aurally. So why is it that so many other shooters are released here, running at half the speed and with poorer graphical clarity?

The weapons would surely be the game's strongest argument for publication. Unlike in most shooters of this kind, *Einhänder* has a depth to its arsenal that really keeps your mind thinking and your heart pumping.

All of the larger enemies you come across have a big gun strapped onto them somewhere.

If you shoot that weapon, you will not be able to grab it after you destroy the baddie itself. Only if you fire selectively around the weapon will you then be able to equip said enemy's gun. Clever, huh?

Each different add-on weapon can be positioned differently on your ship at will and you can collect up to three at a time. Soon after starting a



game you'll be throwing around more firepower than Arnie in all his films put together and you can switch from one gun to another with great ease.

Some weapons do totally different things depending on how you place them on your ship. Some can be charged up to release a concentrated blast.

And there are tons of them, baddies and weapons alike. They are all fully polygonal too, and although the game operates mainly on a 2D plane, they still look awesome as they come zooming in from the background or appear in the foreground, colossal in size, before flying into your field to become their slightly less intimidating selves.

The bosses, too, are more than your average big fish. Each has a spectacular entry into the game that makes you jump. Each has been designed elaborately so that they almost even make sense in their construction, and there are always multiple ways to kill them.

You can go for the limbs, which is usually hard not to do when they are in your face, trying to rub you out. Or you can go for the core which is often tucked away and heavily guarded behind the attacking limbs.

Or you can go for the head, which is often very small and difficult to get at. If you pop the head without damaging too much else on the boss, you will be able to collect its weapon!

The only things that let this title down in any way are the facts that there is no shield upgrade, meaning that you explode when touched by anything, and the other bummer is that there is no two player option.

Apart from those little quibbles though, there is absolutely no reason to prevent this fine product from coming out down under.

It has been a year now that the Japanese have been enjoying it thoroughly and it would certainly be a breath of fresh air for all shoot-a-holics here too.

Xenogears

We suspect the reason this fine RPG never saw the light of day down here was because, and we hate to cast aspersions, of the Christian nature of the American market.

For a while after it had come out in Japan there were concerns regarding the spurious religious content within *Xenogears* which put off its American release for some months.

However it did finally come out in the US, to much praise and adulation too. The thing about this new RPG that hooked so many role players was the cunningly woven storyline.

A STRONG PLOT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

The superb storyline was the fabric of this title that held it together so well. Spanning millennia, the introductory sequence begins with the crash landing of a space ship. Its crew are forced to survive on an unfamiliar planet with few resources.

A thousand years later we see how the small group has evolved into two warring factions. The rich tapestry of events tentatively reveals how the two sides were led to believe in different idols, hence the war.

Further complications are thrown into the pot with the introduction of an anonymous third party who is supplying one of the clans with superior weaponry.

The fact that this weaponry consists largely of some of the most elaborate mechs ever to be seen on a PlayStation is another curio that leads us to ponder the non-existence of this game on PAL shelves.

It is the thematic content that blocks *Xenogears'* path into Australasia. That and the general confusion regarding who has rights to publish Square games locally. Ideas are toyed with, like the unfair armament of one side over another in

a volatile feudal situation. As the game goes on and your party of characters develop their consciousness, they start to query the reasons behind the conflict and even the existence of life altogether.

It would take Square to push for theological provocation in videogames. Until now, the possibilities for education and the introduction of new thought patterns through games have barely even been experimented with.

This lack of intelligence and useful functionality in all games throughout gaming history has been a major part of their relegation to the sub-standard status of child's pass-time amusements.

Xenogears is exactly the sort of game that would trigger much further exploration into the field of using videogames to inspire new and interesting ideological and philosophical concepts.

As a traditional single player RPG, it has the multiple sub-menus you come to expect which explain in detail every fact and figure about your party. But this one has sharper graphics than most, is set in another time in a far

region of the galaxy. But by any standard this is definitely one of the greatest RPGs of all time, and certainly one of the PlayStation's finest. If the last Square title released here was the hugely triumphant *Final Fantasy VII* does it not make full sense to now publish the highly controversial *Xenogears*?

Apart from the many unique attributes already mentioned it also has a better-than-average battle system involving combos. Just rest assured that if and when *Legend Of Legaia* is released here, it is almost a direct rip-off of *Xenogears* as far as the customisable combo attacks go.



Bushido Blade 2

Don't worry, we didn't miss out on much here. *Bushido Blade 2* scrapped the quintessential block button of the first game and took a stance button and an attack button. What remained was a few attacks, a freedom of movement button and a stance change button.

The graphics went a bit downhill too, being the victim of too many characters and not enough polish.

Gameplay was abolished by the removal of the block button, successful defense being performed now by countering any attack with the opposite attack button.

The blood went from red to pink. No new modes were introduced that the first game didn't have. All in all, we don't mind *Bushido Blade 2* is not coming here. And if the screenshots look familiar, it's because they're of *Bushido Blade*, which is graphically a superior game to its own sequel.



Tobal 2

Having learnt much from the abysmal Western release of Tobal No.1, Square rebuilt the game almost entirely to come up with a genuine ground breaker.

Of note in the graphics department was their conversion to completely gouraud shaded polygon fighters, ridding the characters of all corners and seams very cleanly.

If it was locally released now, two years after the Japanese release, it would blow everyone's minds with its silky gameplay, arcade-sharp visuals, and 60fps motion.

THE BEAT EM UP

The basic fighting engine is revolutionary when compared to other beat'em ups. The freedom of 3D movement was only ever seen before in its own prequel.

It is one of the only 3D fighters available, most others being mere polygonal models fighting in a two dimensional plane. I mean seriously, have you ever seen a fight? Do people jump and crouch? No, they don't. They spar, dodge and weave, which is how characters on planet Tobal fight.

The analogue thumb sticks control movement in any of 360 directions around the ring and the Dual Shock vibration support is astonishingly responsive.

Two extra buttons are employed for the functions of ducking and jumping, but their function is much more realistic. Jumping, for example, doesn't lift you teen feet into the air. A Block button, plus High, Mid and Low Attacks control all the action. The

attacks can also be combined with the block button for extra attacks

Some characters can catch certain attacks in their hands and do serious counter damage, provided the caught foe doesn't gain the advantage in the grappling process. The fighters can be grabbed from four sides resulting in different kinds of holds, some harder to get out of than others.

The grappling process itself is quite comprehensive. You can drag them in any direction, punch them, kick them or throw them in any direction. However, with the right input the victim can at any time gain the upper hand in the scuffle.

Projectiles like fireballs can also be used, but they drain your life energy. The longer the projectile is accumulated before discharge, the less energy the player is left with and the stronger the shot will be.

An excellent replay feature saves every fight and gives you the option of watching it, pausing it, changing camera angles and setting the match to be played as a demo when you leave the game on.

Instant recovery was another base Square covered well. No matter how an opponent is launched into the air with any kind of uppercut, they can spring to their feet as soon as they hit the ground. Sometimes it's a backflip, sometimes a roll to one side; it depends on the nature of the fall.

THE QUEST

The original Tobal's Quest was just a pointless wander through unrealistic dungeons and beating the stuffing out of monsters.

Tobal 2's Quest mode was a vast improvement for simply throwing in a basic plot: Emperor Udan sends you off on a mission of your own to rid the land of evil.

You begin your quest in a town. There you can visit the church, talk to the locals or buy potions at the shop; or you wander off and find a dungeon full of all manner of grotesque cave-dwelling beasts.

Ultimately, you have to travel to the very bottom of these dungeons and try to defeat the evil boss-monsters lurking below.

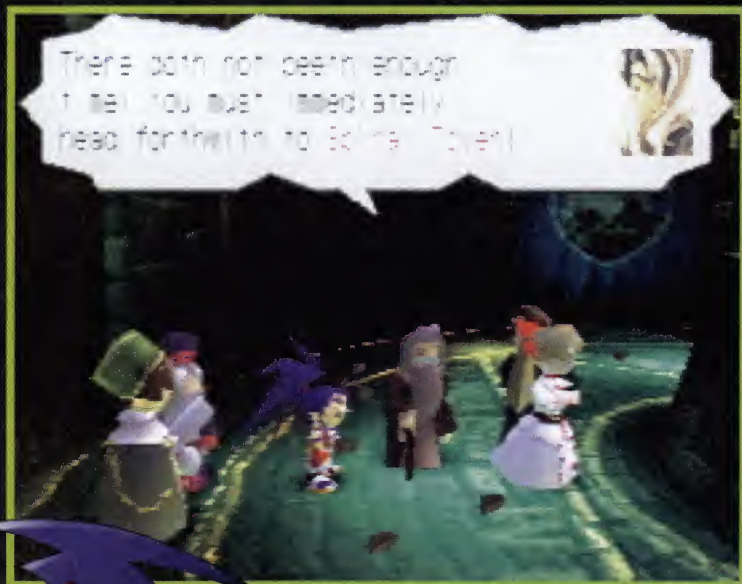
SO WHERE IS TOBAL 2?

By now you might be just feeling the frightening depth of this game. The list of playable characters starts at ten, and from there expands to accommodate over a hundred other creatures, including the grand mascot of Square, that magnificent Chocobo chook, as well as the monsters from Final Fantasy VII.

If Tobal 2 were to receive a local release now, it would be showered with absolute praise. Tobal No. 1 may not have sold that well down under, but Tobal 2 is to Tobal No. 1 what *Return of the Jedi* is to *Caravan of Courage*.



Brave Fencer Musashi



Completed in 1997, this one is a perfect cross between a platformer and, you guessed it, an RPG. The classic Crash Bandicoot style of gameplay in a 3D world is familiar to 99% of PlayStation owners. You would think that Sony or EA would be all too eager to bring it out here as soon as possible, but we don't hear of a release date.

BFM is clearly aimed at a young audience, which is unfortunately one of the more ignored segments of the PlayStation community.

Oh sure, there are countless harmless, cute, funny 3D platformers around, but none that can teach you anything useful (other than how to jump on things to make them pop). In spite of this, absolutely anyone could pick up this game and love it.

IT'S NOT SERIOUS!

From start to finish, the plot pokes fun at itself no end. The translators had a ball rewriting the

script, especially with the King and his utterly incorrect Old English.

The legend of the *Brave Fencer Musashi* is reborn to do the Princess' bidding to save the land of Allucaneet. He is reincarnated in a nice intro and given the sword known as Fusion.

While the Princess is giving him orders, *Musashi* gets bored and runs off to complete the mission so that he can get back to... wherever he's from... he can't quite remember...

You're a blue-haired midget and for the first level the game is very linear. Much like *Crash* you walk him along slashing baddies and jumping around. The analogue control is intuitively implemented, resulting in instinctive manoeuvrability..

You have Hit Points and Body Points. Throughout the entire game you have opportunities to increase the length of your Hit Points and Body Points separately. There is a relationship between the BP and the HP. Every fifteen seconds or so, you lose a single Body Point and gain 4HP.

You have to be careful not to run out of BP either. When he begins to tire, you notice his slowed pace and the lethargic swing of the swords. His head droops, he takes little tiny steps. If he runs out of BP, Game Over.

The sword Fusion has the power to assimilate the magical power of

any enemy in the whole game. Each gives *Musashi* a spell to cast that costs a set number of Body Points.

Once the first level is completed and the sword Lumina is attained and the first of many sub-games is passed successfully, everything changes.

The clock starts ticking. You get a percentage of fatigue to help you manage your sleeping patterns wisely. Days go by at a rate of about one every fourteen minutes. The Sun rises and sets on a daily basis.

The King gives you a room in his castle. The whole town below operates according to their own individual working hours. The different shops all open and close at slightly different times and each one serves a distinct social purpose.

Enemies leave behind money if your life bar is full, otherwise they leave you little red hearts. Nooks and crannies containing treasures that you can take to Connor the pawnbroker for appraisal are to be found throughout the adventure.

By this time you are knee-deep in quests to go on, due to the trouble-stricken and pathetic nature of the townsfolk. Luckily the objectives of these quests are always close by, and the 3D scenery is always very nice.

One of the truly wonderful aspects about this game is the bewildering freedom. After that first level, you are equipped with both swords and given a long list of people who have been captured and hidden somewhere near the town.

When you save someone you can then go and talk to them afterwards, and they usually want to thank you in some big way. This is one of the coolest ideas in the game as it makes the player feel as though they did a good thing for a real person.

It also gets you heaps of excellent stuff. Apart from items, vaccinations, healing and muffins, some of the saved give you lessons in the martial arts. Thus, *Musashi* learns moves throughout his adventures, gets stronger and meets people.

He has to regulate his sleeping patterns so he doesn't drop with exhaustion. Of course, he can eat mint or something to wake him up a bit.

Many sub-games break up the action along the way, including a hair-raising white water rafting trip, an extremely fast suspended mine cart episode, and of course, the old Indiana Jones-inspired 'running from a giant boulder routine'. The end result is a game with enough pace, intellect, and variation to be held in as high a regard as any other square game.

Ehrgeiz



Squaresoft teamed up with fellow PlayStation juggernaut, Namco, to create *Ehrgeiz*. Their aim was to produce a proper 3D fighting game like no other. They succeeded with flying colours.

Ehrgeiz is another title that runs in high resolution at up to sixty frames per second, thanks to the programming genius of the brilliant Squaresoft employees who worked on it.

This is the pinnacle of 3D beat 'em ups. You can run around in any direction freely, or track your opponent and spar with them. The list of characters is long and their fighting styles are all very different.

They all have various sorts of long range attacks and projectiles, the strength of which is determined by a secondary power bar. It can be directly compared to *Tobal 2*.

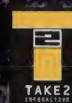
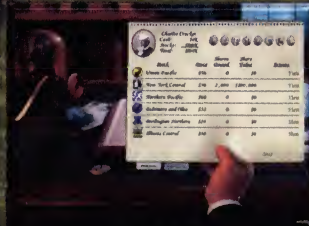
It uses a rather similar system whereby the fighters can attack while in a defensive position. Also, the left thumbstick is generally employed for total control of movement in a 3D environment.

As yet there has been no confirmation that *Ehrgeiz* will be coming out. If we don't hear word soon, we will start to worry (some more) about the sensibilities of various local publishers.

RAILROAD TYCOON II

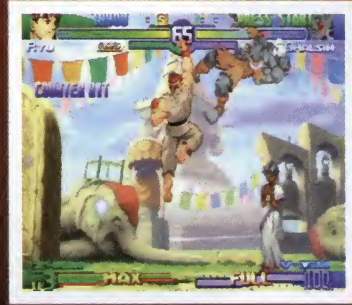
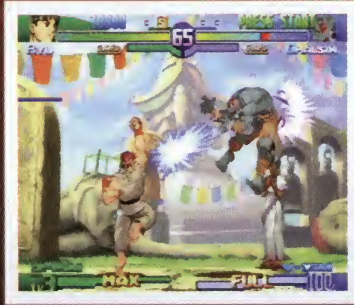
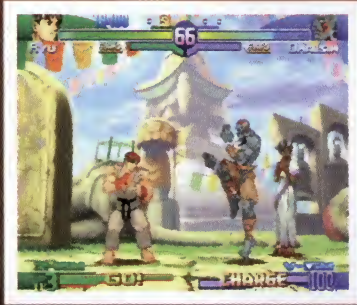


A STRATEGY GAME THAT RUNS ON A DIFFERENT KIND OF ENGINE.



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Falling Flat



The death of 2D?

2D GAMES. Sprites. Layers of parallax. Terms like these make many a modern gamer cringe at the very sound of the words, and yet there are still legions of fans who swear by these types of games. Sit back as we take you on a trip through the developments in 2D gaming, and where it may be going in future.

When the PlayStation was released around 5 years ago, it was sculpted to bring affordable 3D gaming to the masses, to be in just about every living room, in every home.

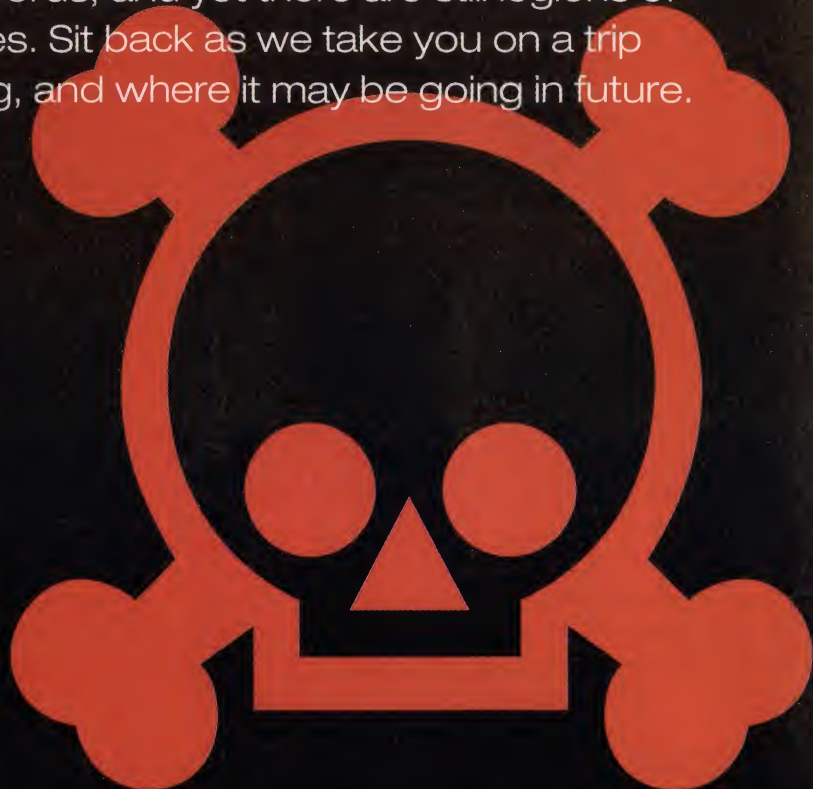
Sony's home entertainment console has succeeded beyond their wildest dreams, squashing all competition, selling more than 50 million units worldwide.

The PlayStation chipset was optimised from the beginning to support 3 dimensional games and nothing else, working from the assumption that now that 2 dimensional games had been superceded, they would be completely abandoned.

But something went wrong. The two dimensional game refuses to die. Against the odds, the soothsayers, purists futurists, and Sony executives, public fascination with 2D graphics and gameplay hasn't gone away.

In certain genres it continues to thrive, evolve, and reach new heights, constantly making 3D offerings earn their keep and run for their money.

Why? What makes the 2D format such an insidious phenomenon? Why do people still even entertain the thought of such games, let alone be entertained by them? What happened to the glorious future we were promised, full of virtual worlds with depth of vision as well as gameplay? Why do we still demand games in 2D?





ONCE, THE WORLD WAS FLAT

For years the only way to interpret the environment and elements of a video game was by the use of a strictly two dimensional environment.

The painted-on backdrops behind arcade vector screens gradually gave way to moving starfields, animated backdrops and scrolling levels of parallax to provide the illusion of depth and space. Pixels were grouped into cardboard cut-outs called "sprites", which cycled through limited frames of animation.

Efforts were constantly made to improve the resolution and properties of what was, at the end of the day, not a true world but only a picture of one. Like medieval landscapes that had no concept of perspective or depth, the world of 2D game design was inherently fake.

It fell to the ingenuity of the programmers to create worlds that absorbed the player. Ideally one would reach a zen-like state of oneness with the game, and enter The Zone.

The four worlds formed again and yet again. Processing power increased exponentially, and by the advent of the PlayStation, it was possible, nay, feasible for entire game environments to be made up of polygons. Indeed, the PlayStation was engineered specifically with 3D games in mind.

A deliberate marketing decision, the exclusively 3D lineup on the PlayStation left the competition in it's dust. At last games looked not like some fake video game, but closer to the wildest fantasies of those who watched Tron and Dire Straits video clips alike.



THE CHOICE OF THE NEXT GENERATION

And at first the change seemed inevitable and total. Not everyone has been keen about this life-altering revolution. People, uncomfortable with change have clung to their 2D genres.

There has been something of a backlash, too. Many games that have purported to be truly three dimensional have betrayed essentially 2D mechanics. While titles like Tobal have allowed freedom of movement in a three dimensional environment, others like Streetfighter EX tied the user to a 2D axis, with the backgrounds essentially the lifeless backdrops they've always been.

Even with the supposed freedom provided by being able to portray a 3D environment, there has been little in the way of innovation of gameplay. Many fall into the old patterns of their 2D counterparts, providing shallow and derivative interpretations of existing genres. We have been promised untold levels of freedom in vast and innovative environments and situations. We have been pledged a whole new experience, and for the most part, we've been stiffed.

BUT DOES IT EVEN MATTER?

However, all this false programming does is remind us what counts in a game. Gamers gradually remembered that the value of a video game lies not in the raw power at it's disposal, nor in the resolution, colours or sound.

What ends up drawing people to games again and again is their playability - the thoughtfulness of design; the soul that shines through its showy construct. Not entirely unlike the vinyl record, the 2D game



refuses to go away. Perhaps in ten years, when the PlayStation 3 or 4 will provide entertainment so convincing that the viewer will be fooled before suspending disbelief, the 2D format will completely vanish. But then, perhaps not.

Technology will provide even better 2D graphics, keeping its fans close to the hearth. Such wonders as cartoons being generated in real time, and other as yet undreamed possibilities could see the 2D game live beyond this apparent respite far into the future.

2D titles will always have the eye-grabbing edge, with clearer cut visuals and a simplicity that mustn't be underestimated.

BUT IT'S NOT AS IF THE DISTINCTION IS CLEAR CUT

While many games boast three dimensional graphics, with polygons moving freely on three different axes, they are not enough to convince one of being in an authentic artificial world.

There is also the question of shadow, of reflections, of the behaviour of light through different conditions, such as fog, or dust. To accurately ray-trace an empty room in real time is well beyond any game system on the market today.

Also textures, which when misused, as they usually are, present a view of a game environment with interchangeable walls and floors. Seeing exactly the same stains and bumps on surfaces that repeat unto the horizon conveys a new level of fakeness, and again you reach a standoff. The only way to avoid this would be to keep track of surface texture down

to the molecule, or use a sufficiently ingenious algorithm to achieve the same effect. For now, these are both unfeasible, so the building of any 3D environment is a question of compromise.

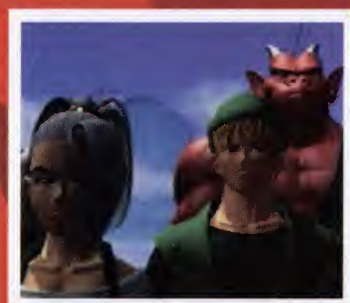
For the foreseeable future, all video games, regardless of what level of depth they claim to possess in the simulation of their environments, will essentially be crude simulcrums of existence cobbled together from optical illusions, hand-me-down visual cues struggling towards a vanishing point they can never reach.

It should also be noted that all of the home video games to date have been viewed on a two dimensional screen. The most rabid proponents of graphics acceleration would do well to remember that it's all in their minds.





▲ Tekken 3's side-step move tried very hard to emulate 3D movement, but failed



▲ The Toba series was the first to show us the true meaning behind 3D movement



▲ Bushido Blade's 3D movement created a dynamic freedom previously unheard of



▲ Dead or Alive suffered from being a Virtua Fighter clone, especially the 2D gameplay



FIGHTING GAMES

This is where the change has been most marked, and most well received. The largely abstract pleasure derived from watching cartoon characters jerkily whomp each other is replaced by more tactile interaction.

In 3D, the separate and distinct limbs of the combatants can block, trap and throw with unprecedented precision and realism.

Trouble is, not that many developers seem to be able to get their heads around the intricate virtues of 3D programming. Luckily for the consumer, it only takes one good bunch out of a great many developing teams to create a satisfying game with true depth.

The undisputed king of fighters at the moment is Tekken 3, which provides satisfying crunches and snaps when you dislocate, cripple and maim. It took a couple of titles in the series before Tekken became

anything like a real 3D game though. It is as bound to the 2D plane as Streetfighter EX because it features only very limited movement into and out of the background.

Namco were smart to program Tekken in this way. They were aware that the period of adjustment would take a while. They knew that no-one would want to play a game that was too much of a leap from what they had been playing the year before.

Playing on the familiarity of the 2D fighter, Tekken was designed with Streetfighter in mind, with the same directional controls for jumping and crouching.

Pioneering the genre were Sega's Virtua Fighter games, which in the beginning swayed all with their realistic portrayal of fighting styles and stances. This was the first series to begin to take advantage of the extra dimensional leeway, granting fighters the ability to dodge blows realistically.

Unfortunately many shied away from this brave new genre because its rudimentary and blocky 3D personalities lacked the attraction of the handsomely drawn and considerably more charismatic sprites of 2D titles at the time.

Dead or Alive and it's very eagerly awaited sequel introduced wrestling moves and, er, simple harmonic motion to the genre. No other game has gone quite so far in proving that women's torsos are indeed three dimensional.

The ever innovative Squaresoft gave life to Toba and Bushido Blade, ground breaking in their use of free-roaming movement. Bushido Blade went a step further into the foreground by designing multi-layered environments and realistic damage from weapons. You would lose the match only if the opponent's weapon passed through a vital body part.

Curiously, while the 3D fighters have been taking the limelight, their 2D cousins have continued to evolve into ever-better incarnations that

make the staples of their heyday look pale by comparison. Among the newer features are chain-link

combos, power bars that charge up for special attacks, and ever-more spectacular animations.

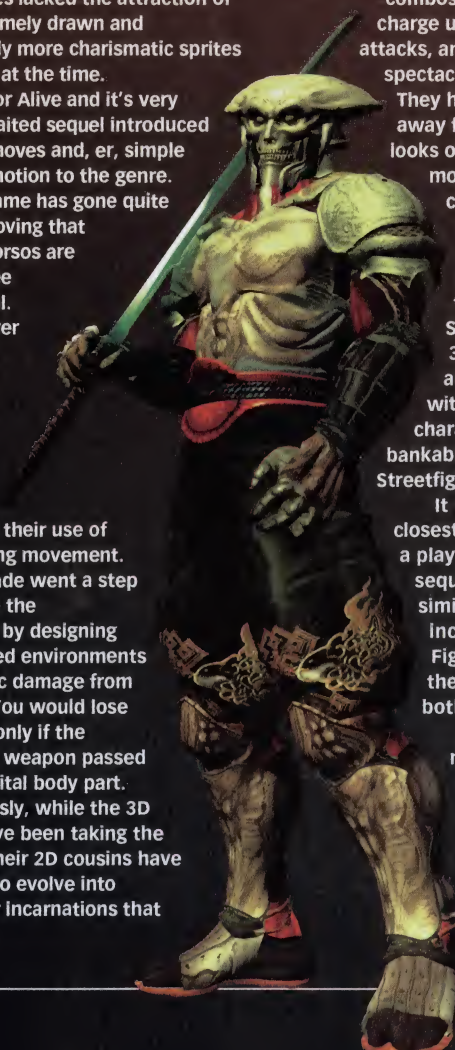
They have largely moved away from the realistic looks of yore, opting for a more cartoony characterisation and outlandish character design. At the pinnacle of this mount is Streetfighter Zero 3, which combines all of the above with huge cast of characters and the bankable familiarity of the Streetfighter franchise.

It provided the closest-yet analogue to a playable anime fight sequence. Other similar titles of note include the Kind of Fighters series and the Last Blade series, both from SNK.

It seems for now that the world is big enough for both of the 2 & 3D fighters to thrive in their own little respective genres.



▲ Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha was essentially still a 2D fighting game



SHOOT 'EM UPS

Space Invaders turns 21 this year. While these games have evolved considerably in the past two decades, the shooter is still mostly associated with two-dimensional graphics and gameplay. This is surprising, considering the leaps and bounds that the genre has made, if only at a superficial level.

Here the lines between two and three dimensions have become blurred. Titles like Raystorm and G-Darius have supplied essentially 2D shooters, but this restrictive field of movement is fleshed out with 3D visuals. While the player is restricted to one plane of movement, the enemies fly through their domain, filling in the illusion of a 3D reality.

This is stark contrast to, say, Omega Boost. While it provides



essentially the same sort of shoot 'em up gameplay, it gives you full freedom of movement in your environment.

You can fly in any direction around your foes, firing off potshots and retreating on wild tangents on the back of your afterburners. Even the N64's Lylat Wars allows you to roam around in any direction as you are drawn towards your goal, but in a much more limited playing area.

The funny thing is, both kinds of game provide essentially the same style of play. You fly through linear courses, fighting identical weak enemies, before finally confronting an end of level boss.

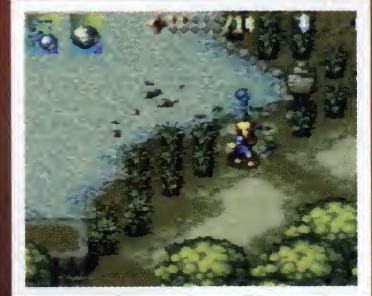
The transition from purely 2D graphics to 3D engines has had very little effect on the soul of these games, which could be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on your frame of mind.



▲ 3D graphics allowed FFVII to look more cinematic than any other RPG before it



▲ Games like Lunar and Alundra signal a strong comeback for traditional 2D RPGs



ROLE PLAYING GAMES

This has really captured the imagination of the masses. With vanguards like Final Fantasy 7, and Final Fantasy 8 hot on it's heels, the 3D revolution has made the abstract and nerdy field of RPGs more accessible to sentimental gamers, who can more readily identify with their on-screen counterparts when they're something other than a few blotchy sprites.

Once again, the gameplay has not significantly changed with the evolution of visuals, being largely a matter of wandering around on huge maps and finding stuff.

Still, for a long time 2D games have used oblique or isometric perspectives to simulate the three dimensional ideal. From this alone, one might surmise that the takeover of 3D in role playing is something of a bloodless coup.

However, some of the new RPGs that are surfacing from both Japan and the United States would indicate otherwise. Games like Lunar: Silver Star Story and Star Ocean Second Story are games that have gone back to their 2D stomping grounds, and the final results are quite a step ahead from what we remember in the Super Nintendo days.

Coupled with the apparent moves being made by Squaresoft to go back to its original RPG roots such as SaGa Frontier 2 and Chrono Trigger 2, there's no telling exactly where this genre of gaming will be taken.

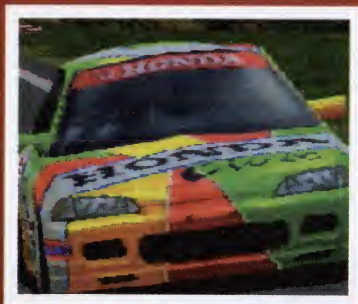


▲ Raystorm's gameplay is no different from a top-down shooter like Raiden



▲ Polygons made G Darius' gameplay far more exciting than its 2D counterpart





▲ Gran Turismo is one of the defining moments in polygonal racing games for the PSX



▲ Driving games have progressed the furthest as far as visuals are concerned

DRIVING GAMES

Here there is no competition. Driving and racing games have always sought to imitate the effect of moving into the screen. Attempts to do otherwise with side-scrolling sprites have been nothing short of laughable ersatz.

Though representing the game elements in such a way as to be both smooth and convincing has been a constant challenge for the programmers, even on the five year old PlayStation it's possible to create driving games that are addictive and compelling.

With titles like V-Rally 2 out there, it's been established that even though 3D graphics still fall short of perfection, a genuine sensation of speed and control lessen the need for pixel-perfect accuracy in the objects flashing rapidly right past you.

WipEout, one of the PlayStation's premier titles, was one of the first games to take full advantage of the console's 3D capabilities. Flying anti-gravity aircraft, the player was able to steer their vehicle not only left and right, but also up and down to a certain extent.

Since it came out, there hasn't been a single 2D racing game on the PlayStation. This is one area where the forward-looking founding fathers of the PlayStation were bang on the money.

The scaling sprites, flat tracks and countless identical palm trees from the racing games of old will not be missed. This is one genre where the domination of 3D is complete. It's not even an issue.



STRATEGY GAMES

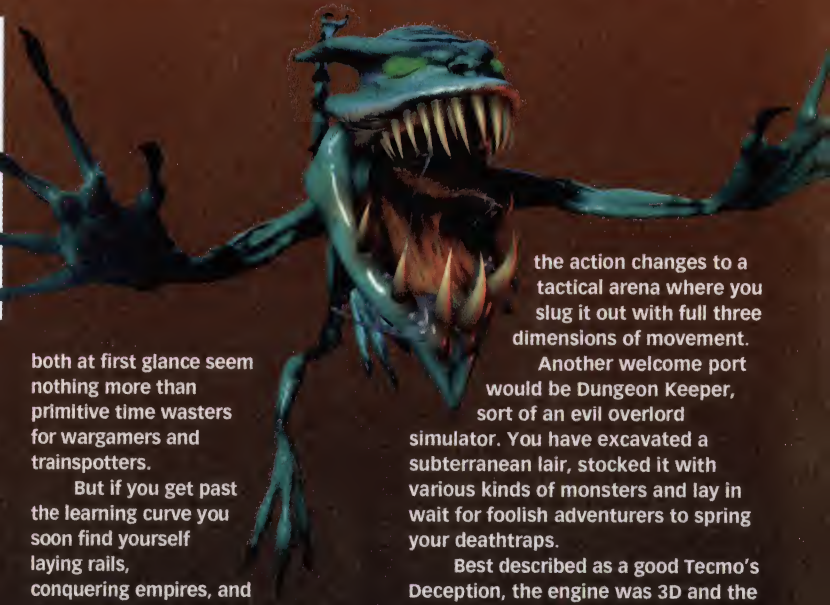
The use of 3D graphics has long been considered unnecessary to the genre. This suits strategy games well, as it frees up memory and processing power for keeping track of obtuse statistics and vast troop numbers, not to mention the (supposedly) superior AI that these games offer.

Recent examples of strategy games that buck the 3D trend would be Civilization 2 and Railroad Tycoon 2. Both of these Sid Meier classics

level combat and the like. Populous for the PlayStation graduates to 3D, with you surveying an entire globe, where you can scrutinise your subjects like the creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water.

The Unholy War is another example of a strategy game making best use of a 3D environment.

Two sides each control an army of vastly different creatures, with a variety of moves that hasn't been seen since Star Control. When they confront each other on the big map,



the action changes to a tactical arena where you slug it out with full three dimensions of movement.

Another welcome port would be Dungeon Keeper, sort of an evil overlord

simulator. You have excavated a subterranean lair, stocked it with various kinds of monsters and lay in wait for foolish adventurers to spring your deathtraps.

Best described as a good Tecmo's Deception, the engine was 3D and the game was viewed from above at a slight angle. However, 2D sprites populated the playing field. Did this matter? Not at all! A great game.

both at first glance seem nothing more than primitive time wasters for wargamers and trainspotters.

But if you get past the learning curve you soon find yourself laying rails, conquering empires, and watching incredulously as the sun rises over your unshaven addiction.

3D has made inroads however, and is suitable to simulation of tactical



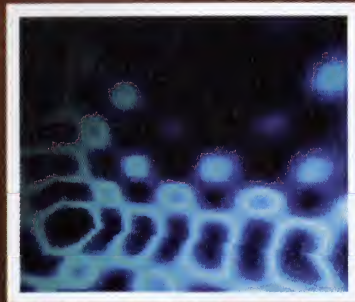
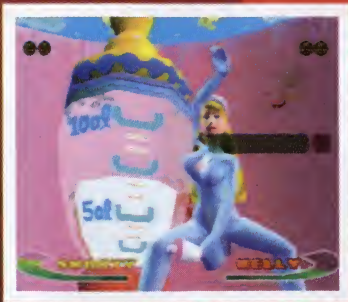
▲ The complexity of gameplay often makes it difficult to convert a game to 3D



▲ 3D environments with 2D sprites is a common trick used in strategy titles today



▲ The awesome music video clips in Bust A Groove were only possible in 3D



▲ Music went for the surreal approach in its simulation of a music synthesiser



MUSIC GAMES

One would think that this fledgling genre would be purely 3D from the start, with titles like Bust A Groove with its disco action, and Music, with its trippy function for making video clips. But Parappa the Rapper, and its sequel, Um Jammer Lammy, have created a curious hybrid, in that it's 2D characters warping and buckling within a 3D environment.

PLATFORM GAMES

Another genre where the lines are blurred, the platformer has been of a two dimensional nature for so long it's difficult to define it as being anything else. From the beginning with Donkey Kong and Pitfall, the basic elements of play have been defined with strictly one plane of movement.

Where other genres have aimed to emulate three dimensions of movement in 2, modern platforming games have turned this historical trend into a palindrome, by trying to emulate 2 degrees of freedom in 3.

This, while being true to the spirit of platform games, usually comes off as being cheap exploitation of the technology with hackneyed ideas.

This is sadly true of many games when new technology comes along, but it's an image most visible in platformers, which the programmers must fight against if they are to make their product stand out from the crowd.

Perhaps the most innovative, certainly the most successful torch-bearers of the platform jumping ideal on the PlayStation are the lads at Naughty Dog software and their Crash Bandicoot franchise.

After a slow start with Crash 1 and 2, the series has built up a style and battery of features that set it apart from the crowd, and indeed,

the genre they occupy.

With innovative techniques like moving into or out of the screen in a race track like manner, and linear courses that range in all directions, Crash is the Homo Superior of the platformers, reminding you of them only when you concentrate.

Even when such transitions are successful, there is a question of definition. If Crash Bandicoot ends up with more racing elements than that of platform jumping, is it a platformer? Since easily definable genres lend familiarity, and arguably profitability to any game, the platformer is likely to stay in its current form for some time.

Also blurring the edges of our perception of platformers is Abe's Oddysee and its sequel. Through pre-rendered characters, multiple levels of parallax and impressive lighting effects the Oddworld games have pushed the purely 2D platformer to its zenith.

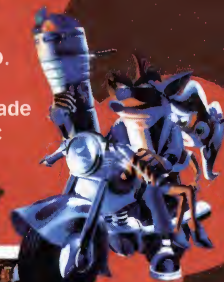
The thought put in to level design and character interaction is truly impressive, with a subtlety that belies the fact that all the elements in play are flat. Platform games began in 2D, and their spirit lives on. However 2D the basic mechanics of them are, 3D graphics have taken over, and nobody's complaining.

Even the Oddworld series is departing from the old form of gameplay they used for the first two games, following the trend and venturing into the third dimension for the PlayStation 2.

EXCEPTIONS

In an industry so riddled with genres and formulae it's easy to forget that there are innovative designers out there who still produce games that either meld and combine genres in innovative ways, or break out with completely new styles of play.

Grand Theft Auto, whilst displaying 3D buildings that rise out of the screen to indicate speed and depth, had graphics and gameplay that were purely 2D. If anything, a return to "old school" arcade precepts, it made gamers on PlayStation and PC alike think twice about what they expected from video game entertainment.



▲ Was it really necessary to do Crash in 3D? The game, after all, is on rails



▲ The Oddworld team couldn't do Abe in 3D because it would have been too complex



▲ GTA somehow got away with being 2D, but it was awesome fun anyway



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER

Activision produces a high quality skateboarding game for all

Let's face it: skateboarding games on the PlayStation are usually below standard. They're typically plagued by low polygon counts, choppy animation, poorly designed interfaces, and bad gameplay concepts...

And given that it's not exactly cricket we are talking about, games like *Street Sk8ter* just don't cut it. Well, thank God for the skateboarding legend that is *Tony Hawk*, because *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* is definitely light-years ahead of its competition.

Granted, it's still in development, but the few completed levels that have been made available to us have completely knocked our socks off.

To put it in a nutshell, *Tony Hawk* basically succeeds where every other boarding game has failed dismally. The track designs are intuitive and creative, allowing for lots of manoeuvres and tricks; and the method by which you perform your tricks is as easy as pie.



▲ Amazing texture detail, crisp backgrounds, virtually no disappearing point. Perfect



▲ The track designs, unlike other games, are very well laid out and conducive to performing tricks and stunts

All that you have to do to perform a trick is gain some major speed, get some air, press in a direction to select an action, and then press the \square button to execute the final move.

Combined with amazingly detailed textures, smooth animations, virtually no disappearing point, and a framerate that is constantly pushing well beyond the 30fps mark, *Tony Hawk* is not only highly enjoyable, but it will easily be a technically great game.

Rarely has there ever been a boarding game, snow or otherwise, which such fluid animations and smooth scrolling. The sheer joy of being able to play a game of this quality is heightened when you realise what a contrast this game is to its competition.

The icing on the cake is that the game's design is thoughtful to the needs of the player. You see, most boarding games stick you in some track for a race,



and might throw in a time trial for that so-called 'good measure'. Here, *Tony Hawk* given his own input such as a 'follow the leader' mode, making the game feel like it was designed by someone who actually knows something about the sport.

For the time being, whether or not *Tony Hawk* becomes the best skating game on the PlayStation is almost a foregone conclusion. It's now a question of how many non-skateboarding fans this game can convert.

Thus far, everyone in the office loves it. Let's hope there aren't any last minute stuff-ups by the developers, because we can't wait for it.

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH TONY HAWK

Australian PlayStation's exclusive interview with the skateboarding legend

PlayStation Magazine was fortunate enough to be able to have an exclusive interview with Tony Hawk, the legend behind this fantastic new skateboarding game.

PSM: Since the advent of console gaming do you think more kids are picking up a joystick instead of a skateboard or skates?

TH: I think that they are more apt to take up both; one gets them excited about the other. I'm sure that kids who play this game but have never skated will be inspired to try the real thing.

PSM: How has street skating changed since the "ollie" and grinds of 10 years ago? Do riders push themselves harder and are street skaters becoming as skilled as (if not more than) the traditional ramp riders?

TH: They are two different styles completely, and vert skating has evolved as much as street in recent years. In fact, many of the modern flip tricks performed on the street have been adapted by a new breed of vert skaters. However, you have to do something spectacular and/or very dangerous in order to be noticed as a street skater today.

PSM: How many real tricks will the game offer? And have you included any signature moves/tricks?

TH: All of the manoeuvres are real skate moves. Once you start combining them you can create virtually impossible moves. Each character will have his own signature moves.

PSM: Did you ever think that a computer/console games developer would approach you to make a game?

TH: No, but I had always hoped someone would.

PSM: When was the last time you were in Australia? What did you think

of the quality of street/ramp skaters while you were there?

TH: I was there in 1996 for the last Big Day Out tour. There is hardly any difference in the skills of skaters in most big countries these days, especially Australians. Skating is no longer heavily U.S. dominated.

PSM: When will you next visit Australia? To compete?

TH: We are planning an Adio tour sometime in August or September, but I don't know details yet.

PSM: What kind of games do you play on your PlayStation?

TH: I mostly play the skate game as we are continuously testing it before its release. Other than that, I play Gran Turismo, Cool Boarders 3, Bust a Groove, and Abe's Odd World.

PSM: Does the game revolve around street or ramp skating?

TH: Both. Everything that is in the game is skateable..

PSM: How many decks will there be and will they include any of your old Hawk boards or are they new shapes/designs?

TH: Each skater will be riding his signature deck, including me. Mine is a Birdhouse Falcon 2.

PSM: Was there any new technology used in your game or is it pure gameplay and not a "lovely looking game with stunning 3D graphics"?

TH: I'm not a programmer, but I never knew that graphics and motion could look so good on a Playstation. You also have complete control of your character, even while performing tricks.

PSM: When do you think you might stop skating and take up a safer sport, like croquet?

TH: When my body tells me to. I don't make ultimatums.

Kevin Cheung



CENTIPEDE

Yet another 70s arcade classic is brought to life in 3D

Anyone remember the game *Centipede*? It was one of those early days arcade games that had a relatively simple concept. You controlled a spaceship that was defending your home planet from a rampaging giant centipede.

This creature was only able to go sideways back and forth across the screen while bumping into things caused it to come one level closer to you. No one was ever able to explain to me why the centipede did this, or why it couldn't figure out it was faster to travel straight down, but what are games for, huh?

Anyhow, Hasbro have been hard at work again, converting this arcade classic to 3D, and they've done a nice job of it. One of the novelties they've added is a storyline, where you play the hero named Wally RunMunzSun. You are fighting in a kingdom called Weedom, which is populated by the Wee people.

3D ENGINE

Since the engine is now true 3D, you not only get the original top down view but several behind the ship views. At times, you can get close enough to see the detail on the ship; and even Wally himself has been modelled with a fine eye.



▲ This game offers some new menu screens and game options that weren't available before

Already, this game is looking tasty with bright colours and crisp definition between the objects and the environment. Even with a large number of enemies on screen we didn't notice any real slowdown, so things are looking bright on that front.

The whole game is as good as the original and it has retained the important element of addictiveness of the "just one more try" variety. Hasbro have split the levels into five per world, with the final one on each world housing some sort of boss. The visuals for each world vary, ranging from lush jungle settings to the white barrenness of the polar regions.



▲ This new version takes advantage of the splendid detail being offered by 3D graphics. Whilst the gameplay is the same, the 2D original looked nowhere near as complex or exciting as this!

The enemies from the original have also been brought over into the new 3D world. So expect, besides the centipedes, the classic spiders, gnats and scorpions to be rendered in polygonal glory.

One of the earmarks of old-school gaming is the old 'one shot and you're dead' gameplay, which by modern standards is frustrating. Even though there are shields to soften the blow, this gameplay has also been retained.

It's especially frustrating when, for instance, you're fighting a boss enemy, and you lose your lives by brushing up against them. To aggravate this, the collision detection needs to be tweaked slightly. Many times I thought I had plenty of time to evade the approaching centipede or spider, but got caught out.

Hasbro retained the arcade feel of the game by giving lives and scoring each level with points. This provides an extra challenge as players of this title will not only be seeking to complete the level, but complete it with as many points as possible, thus immortalising themselves on the score board.

This score is based on how many things you destroy, whether they be the insects or the mushrooms that litter every scene. In addition, you need to protect your Wee people and druids, as well as their homes and shrines.

The original *Centipede* game is also available from the main menu, and it seems to be a satisfactory emulation, but the graphics could be cleaner, and it could be quicker in the frame rate. We look forward to seeing a more complete version.



BEATMANIA

Konami gives the term 'Busting a Groove' new meaning for all PlayStation owners

Ever wanted to be a hip cool DJ? OK, so many of us probably never did care about becoming DJs but *Beatmania* is still looking hip and funky for all those other DJ wannabes.

Beatmania is one of the new music based games that are gaining popularity in both Japan and Australia.

These games are part of trend that started months back, with games like *Parappa the Rapper* and *Bust a Groove*. Ever since, people can't get enough of this new style of gaming. *Beatmania* too played its part in the trend.

Many of you would have seen the original big black box for *Beatmania* in your local arcades, although probably under the name "*HipHopmania*". Now this rocking game has hit the PlayStation with style.

Those that have played *Beatmania* in the arcade would know that it wasn't like any ordinary arcade machine. It was decked out with 5 synthesiser keys and a full sized turntable, and those guys that played could really jam on that setup.

And you're thinking, "How are you ever going to pull that kind of stuff off on a standard pad?" The fact is that you don't have to. You can actually get a special controller just for *Beatmania* featuring the keys and the scratch pad.

It's a funky piece of hardware for hardcore *Beatmania* fans. The normal pad is still usable for *Beatmania*. You just miss out on playing with a cool scratch pad.

The gameplay is exactly the same as the arcade edition. Notes of the song scroll down the screen and you have to hit the right key at the right time. Depending on how good your timing is you'll score anywhere from Great to Poor on each note. Get enough Greats and you get to proceed to the next stage.

The notes you play are part of the music. If you don't play the notes you don't hear the music. Play well, you get to enjoy the music. It becomes a good incentive to practice and learn the songs.

Most of the tracks are pretty hip with a heavy emphasis on Rap, Hip-Hop and Techno styles of music. Some tracks have been remixed for the home version and it looks like there's also a second CD with some extra tracks to play as well.

Not all of the stages are just playing notes. In the DJ Battle, a CPU DJ scratches out a rhythm then you have to follow, testing your timing skills.

There's also a two-player mode. Each player is given sections of the song to play. The challenge is to see who can keep up the best and keep on jamming. *Beatmania* gets challenging quickly and in the later stages the notes come hard and fast.



▲ The original *Beatmania* controller, designed specifically for PlayStation usage. It looks and plays just as good as in the arcades



▲ As can be seen in these screenshots, *Beatmania* is more about sounds than it is about graphics. The graphics only serve to provide a funky accompanying music video, whilst the real magic takes place as you scratch and jam away on the controller

Graphics are simple and plain although there is some great trippy artwork. The notes are colour coded to help know which key to hit and when to scratch. As you're playing, cool dance screens are flashed in the centre window often with imagery of dancers and DJs with lots of colour and movement.

Altogether, *Beatmania* is shaping up to be a very slick package. Fans of the arcade version are going to love the home version. A second disc full of new tracks should give this game plenty of longevity. All you need is a place to play in front of people so you can show off.

If all goes well, *Beatmania* will be the first of many new-age music simulation games. The PlayStation's custom-made scratch pad is only the beginning in terms of special peripherals for music games, as new versions have already been produced in Japan.

There are even dance pads and guitars that have been made for the PlayStation, but that will have to wait for a future story.



DRAGON MONEY

The Game of Life takes on an anime twist on PlayStation

Dragon Money is a board game and it plays like one. One might very well question the wisdom of putting a board game on the Playstation, but at least this one has lovely visuals.

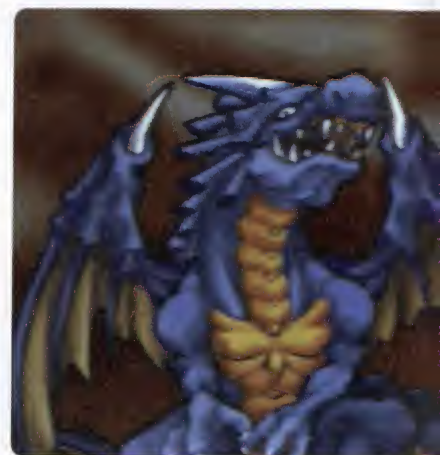
After picking how many players are going to play and what characters you want on the game board, you pick up the dice and get playing. You can have up to 4 human players, but if you don't have that many friends, there are still computer controlled players.

The main goal of the game is to earn the most money. There are plenty of different squares on the board with many different events that happen on them. Some allow you to get money, others make you pay and some are checkpoints where the Guild will check if you're doing anything outside the rules.

There are also many non-player characters roaming around the board. Some of them are friendly and you can bring them along where you go. Others are nasty buggers and you have to fight them before you can progress.



▲ Dragon Money's main draw card is its use of ultra-cute anime characters, which are actually quite appropriate for this board game



Graphically, this game is so cute, I'd play it just to look at the characters, but that's me. Seriously, the art is simply lovely to look at and rest of the game graphics are looking well animated. The sound is similarly cute like the graphics.

Since Dragon Money is a board game, you can't expect a great deal in terms of gut-wrenching gameplay, but it is looking like a cute title and is great fun with a couple of friends. Dragon Money won't be making its way out to our shores anytime soon, but if it does, you can bet we'll have a full review for you.

70s ARCADE

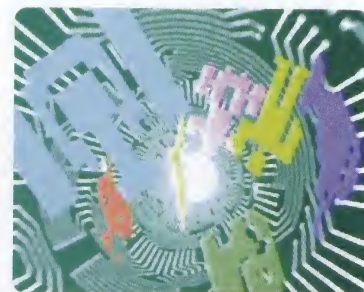
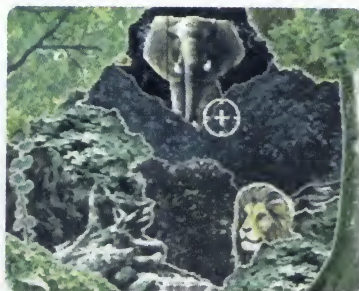
In the world before Donkey, primal chaos reigned

The retro experience has washed over us like a typhoon of nostalgia. In recent years we have seen innumerable movie remakes of 60s TV shows, dance versions of 20 year old chart toppers and the inevitable exhuming of video games past.

Through emulators, repackaged collections, or just digging out the Atari from the back of the garage, countless gamers have sought their idealised memories from the infancy of their gaming experience.

With mixed results. There are still some games worthy of play today, like Wizball, Galaga, and Pacman. But the gulf of years is so vast now, the rest would be hard pressed even to provoke the brief hilarity induced by their bronze-age technology before the player is forced to rip the cartridge from its slot in disgust.

Namco, for example, have had mixed success with their Namco Museum series. Just because today's gamer would have a passing interest in Ms Pacman doesn't mean they'd play



▲ Whilst looking dated, this is an excellent collection of old-time favourites that will pull at the heartstrings of all mature gamers

Roadblasters until their eyes bleed. It is into this already wizened retro market that 70s Arcade hurls itself.

Its mission is to distinguish itself from the other titles and collections on the market by moving even further back in time, pushing back past the now comfortable and passe early eighties into the seventies.

This is the barbaric prehistory of video gaming, before natural selection had provided us with the well-defined and successful genres we enjoy today.



The package includes about twenty emulated games. They fit into a number of derivative categories, such as games that rip off Breakout, games that rip off Space Invaders, games like Pacman.

The whole volume is full of such B-list games, which rode in to countless arcades on the coat-tails of the truer classics. Still, they're all from Japan, so the novelty value is doubled. For a look at the seminal origins of the world's biggest video gaming nation, this could be the go.

SAGA FRONTIER 2

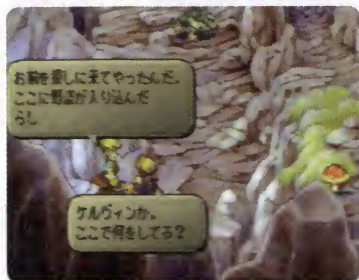
Square's ugly duckling RPG gets transformed into a brilliant masterpiece

This is Square doing what it does best: producing classic RPGs with captivating stories and adventure.

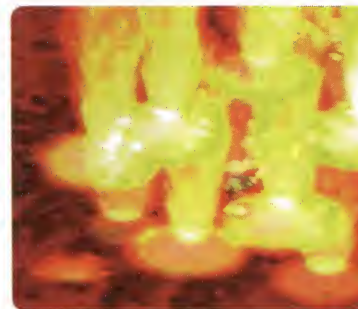
SaGa Frontier 2 has the makings of an enthralling RPG with an innovative new story telling system and some new ways of building your characters.

There seems to be many story branches within the world of *SaGa Frontier 2*. The main story seems to centre around a boy named Gustav. You follow life in his country from when he was born up until he is old enough to start venturing out into the world.

There are points during Gustav's story where the map of the world is displayed allowing you to pick a different



▲▲ The most striking feature of *SaGa Frontier 2* is the use of water-colour 2D backgrounds, which is a landmark as far as 2D games are concerned. This feature is combined with Square's hallmark special effects, which can be seen in the awesome fire spells below



location for the next story section. Picking other towns continues the story from that location allowing you to venture with the characters in that place.

Characters don't seem to have any experience points but the four main point sets do increase after a number of encounters. Characters start with a basic skill or technique but after repeated use in battle your character can develop new techniques during an encounter.

The new technique developed is now listed in the Equipped Arts section of the stats and can be used as a normal

attack. However it seems that new techniques are only ever developed when using the basic skill.

The encounter system of *SaGa Frontier 2* allows you to see potential encounters and avoid them if you want to. Combat is very similar to *Final Fantasy VII*. It is turn based and follows the same system of selecting an attack and the target of that attack and waiting for the round of battle to be played out.

The one thing that is most striking about *SaGa Frontier 2* is the graphic artwork. Each location is a beautiful

water-coloured two-dimensional backdrop, and every place just looks great. The characters are also 2D sprites but the sprites are exquisitely detailed and well animated. Graphics for the combat sections are impressive. The battle environments are rendered in 3D, which allows for spectacular camera angles and dramatic pans and sweeps.

The magical attacks and spells are astounding with great lighting effects and colours. They certainly look like they do lots of damage and they make the combat sections exciting to watch.

The sound for *SaGa Frontier 2* is of similar high quality. Most of the effects are from previous Square games giving the game a familiar sound. The music selection for *SaGa Frontier 2* is also very good with many different and varied styles of music to suit the scene or story.

SaGa Frontier 2 is looking like a very enthralling RPG. Hopefully when it's finished, Square can secure a release for the PAL market, otherwise we down under could miss out on another potential masterpiece from this company. We'll keep you informed.

MARBY'S STORY

Baby's are cute. Maze games are cute. But Marby's a little freak!

There is a whole genre of Japanese games where you run around in a maze pushing blocks around to earn points/escape. They combine traditional arcade elements such as fantastic settings with puzzle elements where you master your environment with limited resources. In this one, you play a Baby with a rubber mallet.

Marby is an aggressive little S.O.B, who likes to hit anything he sees with his blunt instrument. The story begins with Marby running around the playground, hitting whatever's in front of him.

His uncultured aggression sees him wallop the backside of a large bird, who snatches Marby upwards, hoping to crack open his head like some crustation. The bird does not figure on the parachute-like properties of his nappy, and Marby finds himself sailing down into a strange and puzzling land.

The arena is a maze of square blocks suspended high over a series of landscapes. There are no guard rails, and no visible means of support. While at



▲ This game looks like the retarded lovechild of Poy Poy and Bomberman

first glance a realistic setting, you are very much constrained by the puzzle which surrounds you. This challenge is compounded by a relentless and deadly foe who shares the maze, and always moves directly towards you.

Belting it with your mallet only stuns it for a few seconds, so you must use the terrain to your advantage, smashing the low-slung crates to get the coins and powerups you need to survive. Bombs can resculpture irritating puzzles, and you can also access baby bottles and even a mega-mallet. The game was already close to its final form when we saw it, so you have to take this title at face value. Still, this sort of thing can be strangely compelling.

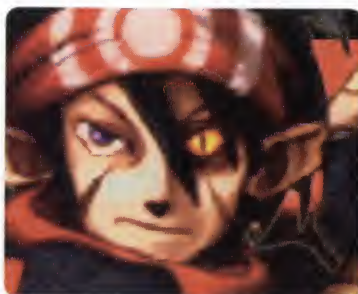
CULDCEPT EXPANSION

Turn-based strategy games making a strong return

Those of you who are jumping for joy over the release of Kartia in Australia may take an interest in this title. Developed in Japan, it bears some uncanny similarities to the story proposed in Kartia.

That is, there is an omnipotent goddess who shattered a powerful orb called the Culdcept, and the world below was showered with numerous Culdcept fragments.

Each of these fragments possess magical abilities that, once discovered by humans, were used to awaken the spirits and demons that lay dormant in the



▲▼ These screenshots alone should demonstrate the complexity of gameplay offered by Culdcept Expansion. Players move around on a game board of sorts, and attack each other using the abilities contained within each of their culdcept cards



world. The people wielded their culdcept powers in the form of cards, and their greed spiralled the world into a meaningless struggle for power.

Thankfully, *Culdcept Expansion* is not quite the Kartia clone that it originally sounds to be. The gameplay mechanics are vastly different: the character placements resemble a board game whilst the various battle sequences are more akin to a card

battle game, similar to either Pokemon Snap or Magic The Gathering if you are that way inclined.

What we've seen so far will definitely interest anyone who's a connoisseur of strategy games. The map layouts are very simplified, looking much like The Game Of Life; and the random nature of character movements being based on a dice creates a very nostalgic feel of actually playing a board game.

With fine 2D artwork and a magical musical score by Yuzo Koshiro, *Culdcept Expansion* could turn out to be quite a fine strategy title.

EGG PUZZLE

Roundheads and squares alike will dig this son of Tetris

Tetris. Everybody loves Tetris. Tetris rates right up there with Windows Solitaire in the most gleefully calculated figures on lost productivity. Destroyer of countless lives, Tetris was a greater weapon against the morals of the decadent west than any soviet mind control laser ever was.

Mysteriously afflicting more women than men, and pushing countless Gameboy units off the shelves, this Russian masterpiece has inspired variants, sequels, ports and rip-offs on every platform known to man.

Egg Puzzle expands on the classic formula, changing the behaviour of the blocks, and thus the strategy employed to destroy them. Instead of lining the blocks up in rows to clear them from the board, colours must be matched. Three of a kind in horizontal or vertical contact will make them vanish from play. There is a catch, however.

The blocks that fall are eggs, of red, yellow, green or blue colour. They themselves cannot disappear from play until they hatch. It is the hatchlings then that are lined up and gleefully banished from the board. Hatching your rapidly filling bin of eggs will really compound this challenge.



▲ We're not sure what to make of these questionable haircuts

To break the eggs open you must steer them into other eggs, or into hatchlings of the same colour. Skilful, or indeed, inept play will fill the screen with mismatched critters, setting the stage for enormous chain reactions and the giddy hilarity they bring.

Egg Puzzle's sketchy plot is depicted by an opening sequence and cut-scenes from Japan's distinctive school of friendly kindergarten animation. It seems that the city is being threatened by hoards of eggs that just fall from the sky.

The intrepid hero, who can't be older than eight, and his little animal



▲ The game never ceases to remind us of recurring theme of 'eggs'. It's cute for the first few rounds of the game



friends have to free the rest of the little critters from their ovoid prisons, and clear the streets of millions of eggs. Fortunately for us, the comprehension of the plot is an optional extra.

You are represented in the game by a tiny little cartoon dude at the bottom left of the screen. Relative success or failure on your part will result in him contorting with pleasure or pain.

Your rival's cartoon avatar sits at the bottom right, and likewise acts as a barometer of their performance. In single player mode, they just act as a gauge as to how close you are to the next level.

But things get more complicated when you enter in the story mode, as opposed to mindless single player play. Your quest to challenge and defeat the menagerie of barnyard animals who threaten the world with their giant egg leads to a direct confrontation. And this means a Vs mode for you.

You are competing with a cute little being in the bottom right of the screen to efficiently dispose of your

never-ending stream of eggs. The rectangular pit into which they fall is divided by a vertical partition. Spectacular play by one side or the other will move this boundary back and forth, giving the skilful more room to move, and the hapless a rather constricted scope of play.

Successful tricks can also rain eggs of rock on your opponent, which in turn must be turned to friendly eggs, before finally they can hatch.

Once your opponent has the drop on you it's difficult to recover, and two player games are both brief and intense. All of which is belied by the overly cute nature of the games presentation.

While the rock-solid gameplay and progressive insanity will be familiar to all who have played *Tetris*, the setting and story are what give *Egg Puzzle* its quirky edge. You are on a mission to save these creatures, and they bop happily back and forth to the music in appreciation of your efforts. *Egg Puzzle* is not original, but it is worthwhile.



▲ Although Tetris has been cloned on numerous occasions in games like *Puzzle Fighter* and *Puyo Puyo*, *Egg Puzzle* is like a combination of every one of them. The difference being offered in this game is the centrepiece, which can be pushed over to the other side to force your opponent's eggs up to the top



ACE COMBAT 3: ELECTROSPHERE

Amos Wong agrees that the PlayStation's greatest flight sim just got a whole lot better!

You'd think that more developers would be working on them by now, but the flight sim genre has yet to make a strong presence amidst the PlayStation's software lineup. Unlike the swag of racing titles begging for attention, the choice is limited should you want to take to the sky.

While early releases like *Blazing Skies* have been around for some time, the closest you'll get to get to piloting anything resembling a jet fighter in a 'sim situation' of late is in the space-bound *Colony Wars*, or else you could opt for flying a helicopter (or its variants) in titles like *Gunship* or *G-Police*.

THE ACE COMBAT SERIES

Namco's *Ace Combat* series launched in tandem with the PlayStation, though at first the game was regarded as anything but outstanding. With experience from their impressive arcade release *Air Combat*, Namco delivered a surprisingly shonky console title with crude graphics and gameplay to match.

Luckily, the developers had taken a good look at its flaws in preparation for the follow-up; the sequel *Ace Combat 2* ushered in a significant improvement in graphical detail and dog-fighting excitement. In addition to the standard 'arcade' control method, experienced players after more realistic handling could opt for the 'expert' controls.

The slickly presented sequel also featured one of the best HUD, mapping and radar systems to appear in a game to date that requires efficient enemy tracking in an expansive 3D environment.

Even compared to some recent titles, its excellent interface remains unchallenged. With varied missions, environments and large choice of planes to pilot, *Ace Combat 2* established itself as arguably the premiere flight sim for the console, despite a low difficulty curve using the arcade control settings.

The futuristic experimental fighters acquired towards the end of the game and the Area 88 anime-inspired canyon mission provide the springboard for the series' latest addition.

Ace Combat 3:

Electrosphere is set in the future and as soon as the intro fires up, Namco's new approach is apparent. It expands on its predecessors by incorporating a story element with a heavy emphasis on the world view and politics, conveyed via newscasts.

Borders and alliances between countries have given way to a new Corporate world order. The Superpowers are now two multinational corporations: General Resources and Nucom, the latter formed largely of ex-members from the former.

Between them, the Companies dominate the military applications, space industries, computer technology and nanotechnology; both also possess a formidable military presence. When Nucom responds with hostility to a military exercise by its competitor, their

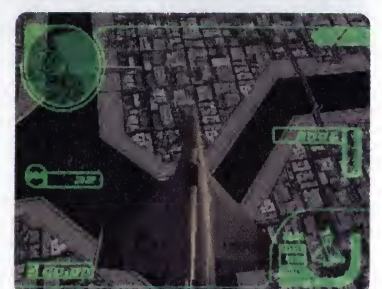
tenuous relationship escalates to war.

Playing the role of a pilot from the security agency Eupio, you are sent in alongside wingmen Lena Hirose, Fiona Fitzgerald and Erich Yeager to maintain the peace. This basically means bombing or shooting down Nucom or General Resources' installations or planes!

With Namco enlisting the help of studio Production IG, the game features a cast of anime characters, from your wingmen to the newscasters and the people involved in the world events - another first for the series.

Like IG's high profile contribution to the *Ghost in the Shell* game, *Electrosphere's* intro is an extremely

impressive hybrid of 2D and CG animation. While initially the fighters that are on offer are based on existing designs, albeit upgraded, some of the futuristic planes gleaned from the intro are spectacular.



▲ The gameplay being offered in *Ace Combat 3* looks nothing short of spectacular, offering the thrills of dogfighting and bombing runs, as well as combat in space!

REMARKABLE CRAFT GRAPHICS

With sleek, organic styling, they represent some of the most unique looking craft to appear in a game of late. If forced to make a comparison, the main space ship from locally available anime *Sol Bianca* comes to mind.

Needless to say that with the times, weapons systems have become more sophisticated. Often you can choose the secondary weapon your craft is armed with. Two options are available, complete with technical specifications to help choose the right one for the job.

These include air to ground missiles, heavy machine guns, pulse lasers and scatter bombs. In most cases you can select from a range of fighters, while in others only one specific model ideal for your mission is available.

As with the previous game, missions include bombing raids, enemy tracking and pursuit runs as well as air convoy escort. In one case, a timed satellite tracking and targeting run in the Earth's upper atmosphere requires you to pilot a very sleek shuttle!

Ace Combat 2 was structured in a linear manner with variation, in that the player was offered a choice of missions to select from as the game progressed. In the sequel, it's reported that the kind of mission you embark on depends upon your performance in the previous mission.

You will be ranked according to how long the main parameters take to be completed, as well as the number of secondary targets destroyed.

Furthermore, during certain missions there will be an option to choose different paths that will affect the outcome of story. Details are sketchy, but it seems that it's possible to side with either of the Corporations to some degree, which in turn impacts on the world events.



▲ Amazing geometry and transparency effects to accentuate effects like motion blur and explosions are just some of the dazzling visuals on offer by *Ace Combat 3*

Ace Combat 3: Electrosphere is slickly presented, utilising techy interface screens, net newscasts and videomail from the other characters in what looks like a futuristic version of the internet. Additional bytes of information such as ads and profiles for the Corporations further consolidate the world view Namco have created to immerse players.

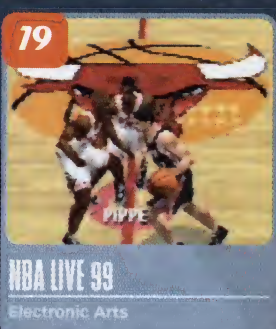
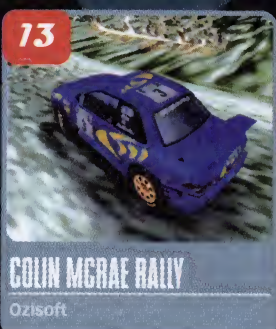
The game graphics have been enhanced, with jet trails during high speed maneuvers, 'blast ring' explosions and lens-flare effects. Currently available in Japan, it is being translated into English in London for a US release, with an imminent PAL version shortly afterwards.

In the context of Namco's other games, *Ace Combat 3* is yet another stunning display of graphical splendour. One could very well say that it does for the *Ace Combat* series what *Ridge Racer Type 4* did for the *Ridge Racer* series. Let's just hope this doesn't extend to its longevity.

If other developers are planning a flight sim for release this year, they'd better take note. Chances are that with *Electrosphere*, Namco will be maintaining their air superiority, blasting any competition out of the sky.

▲ Many of the new aircraft designs are sleek, futuristic, and kick-ass. Namco have gone out of their way to impress this time

PLAYSTATION TOP TWENTY



STAFF TOP 5

KEVIN CHEUNG

- 01 Kartia
- 02 SaGa Frontier 2
- 03 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater
- 04 Kurushi Final
- 05 Point Blank 2

HILLOUS LESSLIE

- 01 Driver
- 02 Wipeout 2097
- 03 Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped
- 04 Tenchu: Stealth Assassins
- 05 Legend of Legaia

JAMES COTTEE

- 01 Williams Arcade Classics Volume 2
- 02 Tenchu: Stealth Assassins
- 03 Driver
- 04 Um Jammer Lammy
- 05 Kurushi Final

PLAYTEST CONTENTS



Every game featured in our Playtest section has been reviewed independently and objectively by our team of writers. We aim to give an informed and comprehensive idea of what the game is about, and most importantly, whether the game is good or bad. Each game reviewed receives an overall score out of 100 which should be seen in context of the type of game it is and in relation to similar titles it is competing with.

THESE FACTORS ARE AWARDED UP TO FIVE STARS:

GRAPHICS	Does the game look good and has it taken advantage of the available technology?
SOUND	The PlayStation offers developers the potential to create mind blowing audio. Have they?
GAMEPLAY	This is what it boils down to. Is the game enjoyable and fun to play, or will you hurl the joypad at the TV?!
DIFFICULTY	Is the game difficult? Does it take a great deal of skill to play? The higher the mark here, the more difficult the game is.
LIFESPAN	How long can you expect this game to hold your interest? Will you play again after you have beaten it?
PLAYERS	Some games allow two or more players to take part, either alternately or simultaneously, and some can even be linked to a second PSX for head-to-head two-player action.
GAME FEATURES	Many games take advantage of after-market devices such as analogue controllers, steering wheels, Sony's PlayStation Mouse, various light guns, the Multi-tap four-player adaptor, memory cards, various peripherals and accessories.
ALTERNATIVES	A selection of games similar in concept or appeal to the one reviewed.

WHAT OUR RATINGS MEAN:

100%	AN INSTANT CLASSIC, YOU MUST PLAY THIS GAME!
90	EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD. ADD IT TO YOUR COLLECTION NOW
80	A VERY GOOD EFFORT MORE THAN WORTHY OF ATTENTION
70	A GOOD GAME THAT DOES THE JOB IT WAS DESIGNED TO
60	HAS SOME NICE IDEAS, BUT COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER
50	NOT GOOD, BUT OK IF YOU LIKE THAT SORT OF THING
40	THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU BOUGHT A PLAYSTATION FOR!
30	OH DEAR, SOMETHING HAS GONE HORRIBLY WRONG...
20	DON'T BOTHER, A WASTE OF BOTH TIME AND MONEY
10	IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS WITH A COOL BLACK DRINK COASTER!

58 QUAKE 2

The bane of office productivity leaps from the desktop to the PlayStation, and in surprisingly good form too!

62 KARTIA

Turn-based tactical combat in a storybook fantasy world of wonder. Yes, it's another RPG

64 POINT BLANK 2

The PlayStation's definitive shooting gallery game from Namco just doubled the stakes

66 KURUSHI FINAL

Tetris meets War of the Worlds- a wonderful puzzler in which you must stop the giant blocks before they squash you flat

68 CARMAGEDDON

Like Grand Theft Auto but with a lot more blood. This is the game that brought the cult movie Death Race 2000 to life, and was nearly banned worldwide as a result

70 CASTROL HONDA superbikes

A challenge for MotoRacer 2? Souped-up superbike simulators don't get any better than this, or do they?

72 DRIVER

High speed car chase insanity in huge urban environments. Think Grand Theft Auto on crack

76 BUGS BUNNY LOST IN TIME

We have been watching this rabbit's crazy antics for the last 50 years. Now you can play him

78 CROC 2

This 3 dimensional platformer pushes ultra cuteness past the previous limits of tolerance



QUAKE II

PC and N64 have been quaking for ages. It's time to Quake too

Here it is, the phenomenon that changed office politics for good. First, id made *Wolfenstein 3D*. Based on a popular yet crude 2D adventure game called *Escape From Wolfenstein*, Wolf3D was the very first FPS (first person shooter) to really take everyone's breath away.

Out of the Dark Ages of the early PC's basic strategy games and flat platformers came this wonderfully three dimensional thriller like nothing before it. It barely even resembled *Escape From Wolfenstein* in any recognizable way. Since then no-one has looked back.

Wolf3D gave PC gamers their first taste of what it would be like to live and play inside a 3D world. Even though its universe was constructed entirely from basic cubes and the floor and ceiling were flat and featureless, it set a benchmark - no, really - in videogames.

Unfortunately, *Wolfenstein* never really shook off the label of single player corridor shooter. It had no

multiplayer support.

Three years later came *Doom* from the same PC

programmers at id. It represented a huge leap forward over *Wolfenstein* due to its enormous levels which had multiple storeys, staircases and other devices that showed off the new engine's 3D capabilities.

Of course, the real reason everyone went out and bought this game... no, no, the reason everyone borrowed their friend's *Doom* to copy onto their hard drive was because of the unprecedented multiplayer options on offer. id can be attributed with the invention of the word 'deathmatch' almost exclusively.

If you've ever had the pleasure of playing PlayStation *Doom* or *Final Doom* you'll know of the helpless addiction it can smite you with. You'll also be familiar with the crappy graphics, but then again you'll be aware of the tremendous enjoyment to be gained from linked up deathmatches and cooperative play. Before *Doom*, people thought that *Wolfenstein* was fun.

THE NEXT STEP

By this stage, they weren't left with many options. Having become the reigning champions in the realm of the first person shooter, they had to come up with a new game that would be to *Doom* what *Doom* was to

Wolfenstein. Luckily, their

successes had brought

home the bacon,

making the developing

team at id rather

rich, which in turn

allowed them to up

their resources and

staff over time.

The next step

was obviously to

bring the animated

sprites to life

by recreating

them out of

three

dimensional

polygons.

Apart from

the obvious

differences, id

had made *Quake* a much

darker game than *Doom*

had ever been. They

scrapped the futuristic

space station setting

with walls of

incomprehensible

computer banks in

favour of a more harsh



▲ There has never been a more concise and in-depth game about flower arranging on the PlayStation before

and brooding medieval theme. It was set in another realm altogether.

Arches and stout, solid doors replaced the window panels and sliding portals of *Doom*. *Quake*'s architecture was a point of focus for id and the great chambers and bleak passageways reflected an almost satanic threat to anyone who dared enter them.

Lighting effects were installed to enhance the atmosphere, and they worked. Shadows were a major factor in upping the creepy stakes. The gothic halls and corridors were fire-lit by wall torches which flickered like real flames. Dim, grim, bleak and desolate were words the *Quake* world brought to mind.

Of note was the level design, which took full advantage of the new and extremely competent 3D engine *Quake* used. Walkways, moats, underwater chambers, mezzanines and irregularly shaped rooms all intertwined to make bizarre labyrinthine complexes.

MULTIPLAYER

It wouldn't be *Quake* without this

MULTIPLAYER



The two player deathmatch can sustain for months. There's no experience to match the thrill of stalking and be stalked by someone with identical Quaking skill as yourself. The wide array of arsenal is sure to entertain anyone for a long time, except perhaps vegetarians.

In a two player game, the game doesn't falter. In a four player game, in that rare event when all four players are close and facing each other, it slows down a bit, but not much even then. Four player games are tops.

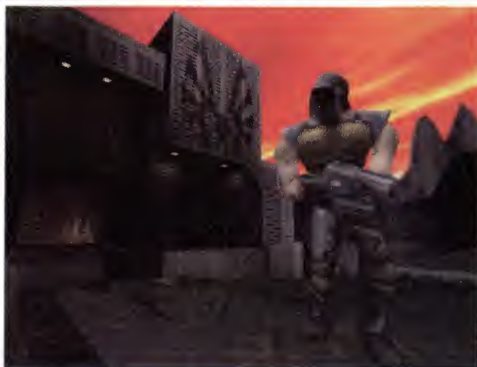
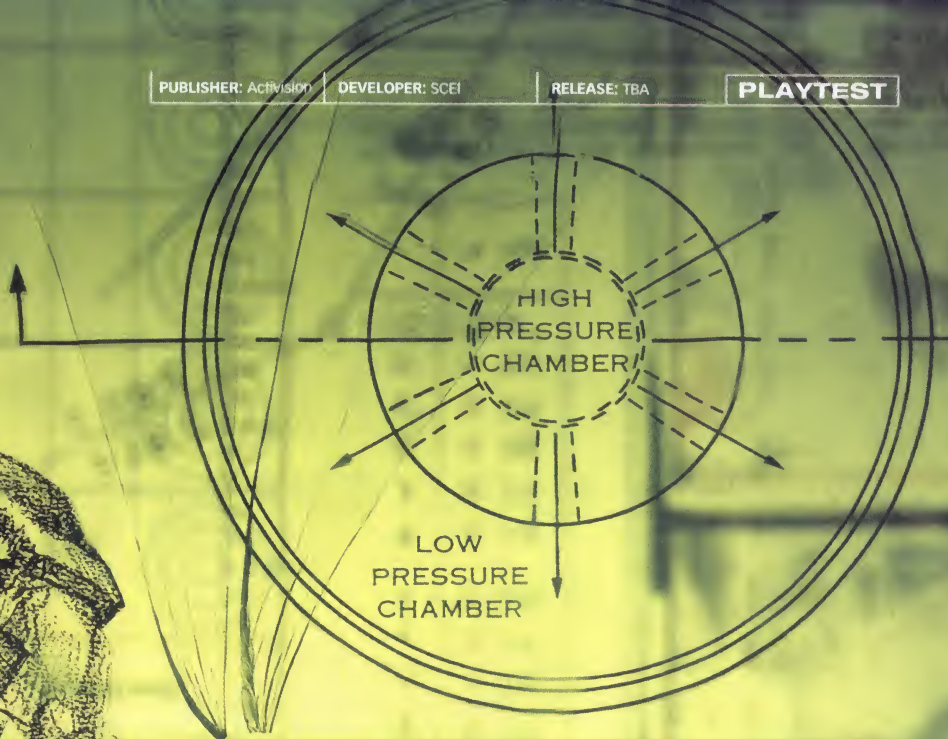
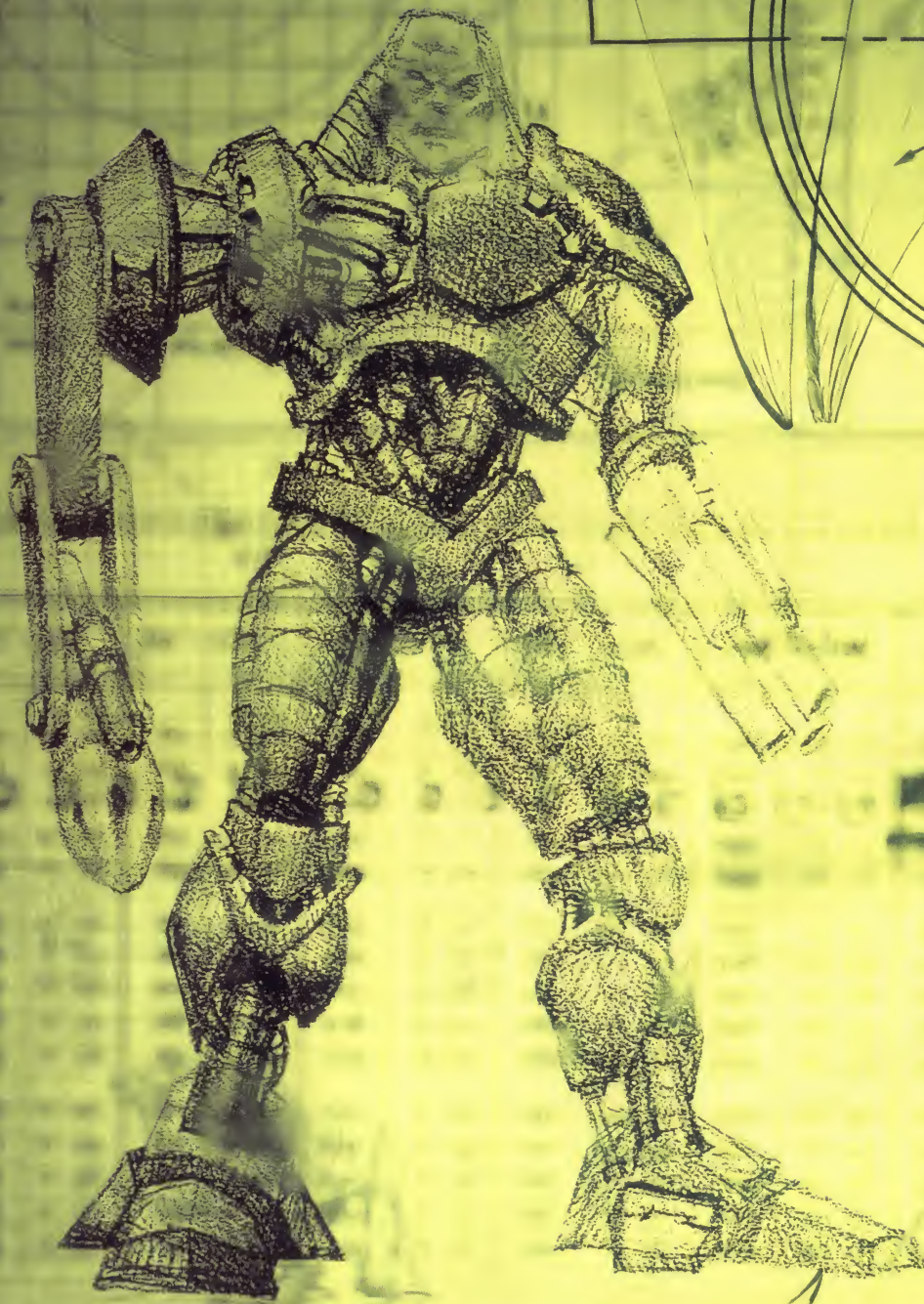


PUBLISHER: Activision

DEVELOPER: SCEI

RELEASE: TBA

PLAYTEST



DOOM + QUAKE = Q2

Quake 2 takes *Quake* and *Doom* and combines them to create an all-out horror fest full of monsters – men meshed with machines – in a sordid sci-fi setting. The interior decor is not quite so flashy and confusing as the blinking computer panels in *Doom*, almost resembling the story design of the original *Quake*.

BUT WHAT'S THE PLOT?

What's a first person shooting game without a good storyline? Unpretentious, perhaps? *Quake 2* is slightly less pretentious than most shooters in that it doesn't focus intently on its background story, but it still has a tale to tell so lets all laugh at it.

The Strogg are an uncouth bunch who dwell on some small orbital moon which unfortunately happens to be in our solar system. They are an ugly assortment of disgusting cyborgs who have learnt to make use of artificial attachments to enhance themselves. They've been doing it for centuries, but now they've run out of food and equipment on their home planet.

Having exhausted their resources, the Strogg turn to Earth for their fleshy needs. Although a dirty, overpopulated planet, we represent fresh green pastures to the Strogg.

They attack hard and fast, in scores. The Earth's military forces are being overwhelmed when a plan is devised to launch a counter-attack, targeting the Strogg's home planet, the heart of the problem.



▲ The architecture is often rather brain bending and the bad guys never fail to send a shiver down your spine

Thousands of one-man pods are sent out through space, destined for some planet. In a catastrophic act of retaliation, the Strogg emit some kind of electrical disruptor just as the pods are entering the planet's orbit, destroying the pods' navigation systems. The pods crash land on the surface, and all the marines on board die a slow, burning death on the way down.

Except for you. Your pod happened to bump into another pod just before the electrical disturbance, shorting out your navigation board. Later it kicks in and you land safely in hostile territory, the only survivor of a terrible mishap.



'THE DUAL SHOCK HAS BEEN EMPLOYED BY THE GAME FOR OPTIMAL FRAGGING'

FROM PC TO PSX

The debate over the PlayStation's capacity to run *Quake 2* has until now caused much muttering among PC and console gamers alike. One year ago it was an honest shock to hear that it would be ported to the PSX. The lack of any PSX *Quake 1* thus far had squarely indicated that this game's programming magnitude was simply too much for the five year old console.

Although *Quake 2* doesn't have quite the resolution of a decent PC with a video card and graphics accelerator, it's got what counts.

A PC-ported console game has to do three things in order to survive. It must maximize the potential of the controller for optimal handling over the keyboard, it must feature the same strong gameplay merits as its predecessor, and must run as fast.

In a drastic act of blatant stupidity, *Quake 2* was not programmed to be compatible with the PlayStation Mouse.

Frankly I reckon something went wrong, but a lot of console owners don't know how the mouse melds with your mind in a good deathmatch session, so I guess no-one will notice. A tool of preference, no more...

Getting back to the three things, *Quake 2* has 'em all. Although no mouse prevails, the Dual Shock controller has been fully employed by the game



for optimal fragging efficiency. You can move around at any speed, in any direction and you can aim your weapon at any speed, in any direction.

Using the analogue thumb sticks, the gameplay's handling touches on the silver lining of the mouse's cloud. The controls are completely configurable too, so everyone will find their own comfortable setting.

MUMMY, WHAT'S GAMEPLAY?

The PlayStation was made for 3D games. The gameplay of *Quake 2* is the very root of 3D gaming. Like some crude racer, FPSs are all about getting from a



to b. Thing is, you've usually got some big troll chasing you in an FPS.

A good game puts you on the edge of a cliff emotionally, by convincing you that you're driving at 298km/hr, that you're a ninja amongst hostile samurai, or that you're a busty brunette getting eaten alive by a tiger. *Quake 2* is the very definition of gameplay.

Quake 2 makes you think that you are singlehandedly taking on an entire alien army comprised of several different species, many of which have been robotically enhanced and equipped with large cannons.

In *Quake 2*, the bad guys are so fearful that you have to pay the game your deepest respect. You must concentrate all the time on not getting killed.

Most PSX FPSs so far have been silly futuristic numbers in which the player is repeatedly accosted by cardboard cut-outs of David Hasselhoff, or some such monster. You follow the path, collect the keys and kill the baddies.

The level design is astounding, every bit as inspired as the best of the PC version. Some areas look similar to some PC Q2 levels, but none are the same. All levels in the PlayStation version have been redesigned with the system's capabilities in check.

For what it is, it's marvelous! If you've never seen *Quake 2* before, then you'll no doubt be impressed with the version headed in the direction of your PlayStation. It ranks up there with the finest graphical splendour in the PlayStation's entire library.

The levels are more cunningly interwoven, with no two chambers alike. There are plenty of ups and downs and the camera flows well with them. *Quake's* torch of torture is carried through in the diabolical architectural puzzles, which I'm sure were just thrown in to break up the slaughtering a bit.

The slaughtering itself is the key, though. It is the thumping heart of *Quake*. Its essence is the instinct of survival. That's what gets through to people who play any *Quake* game. That feeling as if they're being hunted.

MARINE VS MACHINE

It's not an easy task, either. The atrociously hideous hybrid machine men you come across are all armed to the joint.

Few of them have any real limbs left as their lots have been leased to chainguns, railguns, grenade launchers and other post-Arnie instruments of assault.

There are eleven weapons in all, including the pistol, shotgun, super shotgun, machine gun, the rocket launcher, the hyperblaster and also the BFG 10k.



IT'S MOSTLY SMOOTH, MOSTLY...

In a one player adventure game, the frame rate maintains an even balance at around thirty per second. When you're prowling around on the hunt, amazing architecture comes at you smoothly like some desolate nightmare. When you're running around madly in a frantic retreat, same thing, only faster.

While it's true the frame rate drops occasionally (when multiple enemies and items cram the screen), it never really

gets below twenty. Besides, when you've got more than four cyborgs on you at once, you're about to die anyway.

Being only about four fps slower than broadcast television, it is hardly noticeable. The other 97% of the game repays you anyway at a rate over TV's 25fps.

All up, it's the greatest FPS to come to our grey box in all these years. If you like this sort of thing, go out and get it now. If, on the other hand, you're an online gaming fiend who likes to rumble in mouse-managed deathmatches on a Pentium II, you may be disappointed. A solid purchase nonetheless.

Hillous Lesslie



▲ Not exactly a good place to get a massage, unless you like it rough

ALTERNATIVES

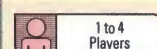
DOOM



PSX Doom, Final Doom, Disruptor, Exhumed

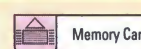
GAME FEATURES

PLAYERS

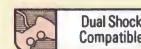


1 to 4 Players

ACCESSORIES



Memory Card



Dual Shock Compatible

PlayStation

04

△○×□

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Crisp, smooth, fast
■ SOUND:	★★	Sadly, nothing special
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	The soul of third dimensional gaming
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★★	Yes, it is very difficult
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★★	The deathmatches and difficulty ensure long life

■ OVERALL
Quake 2 comes home in style. An instant classic, for bloodlust Strogg hunters

88

PERCENT

LEGEND OF KARTIA

PAL territories finally get the closest thing to Final Fantasy Tactics



attached. The people have grown lacksadaisical, and sinister forces seek to pervert the ancient power of the druids and bring about their own new order. This new regime say they want to create a new Eden, but their ultra shifty looks and crimes against humanity betray darker motives...

Once there was only one source of *Kartia*, material painstakingly and expensively harvested from "World Trees". It was a resource tightly regulated by the druids, but now the use of silk or mithril to create inexpensive burns of sacred texts is commonplace. The sinister Raguruzet has pushed for the liberalisation of *Kartia*, and now the once sacred secret of their use can be earned like a driver's licence.

Turn-based tactical combat games have been scarce on the PlayStation, despite a groundswell of demand from diehard gamers. It often seems with Sony and its distributors that if giving the people what they want gets in the way of their top-down authoritarianism, then the proletariat will have to eat cake.

When faced with such neglect many proles resort to import games and hardware, but this won't be necessary for *Kartia*, as it's bucking the trend and actually getting a local release.

From the Nihonjin who brought us Megami Tensei and Persona, *Legend of Kartia* is a game of tactical melee which belies its multilayered complexity with cartoonish innocence and gilded style.

The setting? The world of Rebus, a fantastic planet where magic and monsters roam free in the latest bastard child of Tolkien. In this magical kingdom the burden of labour has been lifted from the people not by science, but by "*Kartia*", enchanted playing cards which in the skilled hands of a wizard can invoke anything from a hot mug of coffee to the destruction of the entire universe.

Like with any other absolute power over the forces of nature, there is a burden of responsibility that comes

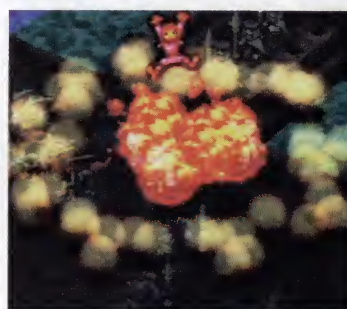


▲ The magic spells in *Kartia* can affect the land structures around you

He seeks the one *Kartia* that could remake the world, and to this end he has abducted a young druid girl. However, young damsels don't rescue themselves.

You can play either Toxa Classico, headstrong knight, or Lacryma Christi, shrine warrior and comely lass. Like in many Japanese games the gender of the characters is not immediately apparent, but their effeminate features and outrageous costumes make for lively viewing in the story-book mode which dominates the adventure. The plot is quite involved, and playing through either of the two different quests will take you upward of 30 hours.

Either course will take you on a unique path through the events of the game. Through the eyes of both characters a composite view of the world of Rebus is built up, as they occupy alternating chapters in the story. Thus new detail is revealed in the



tapestry of the plot with each reading. The story is told in the same engine used for combat, superimposed with lavish character illustrations by Amano Yoshitaka, renowned for his work on the Final Fantasy series, punctuating the dialogue. After about twenty minutes of intro you get to the first battle, and the pace picks up from there.

In combat you control the members of your party, plus any number of "Phantoms" you choose to create. These monstrous apparitions are conjured up on the spot by you to suit the needs of the battle, and to provide large groups of combatants without bogging down the intricate plot with extra characters.

The tactical map is nothing flashy, but functional nonetheless. The terrain and structures are all of a 3D polygonal nature. The characters themselves are sprites, and whilst stylised, iconic, and yes, simplistic, stand out well from their backdrop. The weapons in their hands are clearly visible, as is the rolling lay of the land, and herein lies the strategy of *Kartia*.

KARTIA CARDS

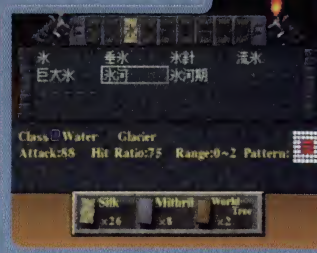
Playing with Magic Cards

COMBOS



The magic spells in *Kartia* are constructed through combinations of different *Kartia* cards. For instance, you could combine fire with wind to generate a firestorm, or you can strengthen an ice spell with stone. The possibilities for combinations in *Kartia* are absolutely huge, meaning that the strategy is quite deep.

CARD ATTRIBUTES



Each character type has their own strengths and weaknesses, especially the Phantoms who do your fighting for you. These creatures are of three distinct species, who's power against each other correspond to the Rock-Paper-Scissors formula. Coupled with this is the lay of the land - different weapons and armour work better against foes on higher or lower ground.

The Kartia that the plot revolves around also constitute the magic system in play. When you cast a spell, the kartia is cast above the characters head, whence the camera rotates around the battlefield and the sky blackens. You feel like yelling "By the power of Greyskull...!"

Your attack spells correspond to the four elements, fire, water, earth and wind. For instance, you can cause earthquakes to buckle the land and twist it to your advantage. Or freeze a large body of water and let your troops march across.



▲ Basic movement is achieved along a grid hidden in the map

Or invoke a fiery asteroid to fall on your enemies, ridden Dr Strangelove style by some kind of demented pyxie. Each spell has a stylised animation reminiscent of the magic from Golden Axe, shuddering the map and raining retribution on rival armies.

Kartia are a limited resource, though. At the beginning of every battle you must take stock of how many you use to replicate weapons and armour, and how many you use to spawn Phantoms, saving the rest to rain deadly spikes of ice on your enemies.

The role playing element, while a diversion in its own right, is secondary to the mechanics of the tactical game. It becomes apparent that long term appeal lies not in the quests, which could be knocked over in 50 hours, but in the possibilities of fighting your friends.



'TUTORIAL MODE RUNS YOU THROUGH THE BASICS OF MOVEMENT AND MAGIC'

A nice touch is the tutorial mode, which runs you through the basics of movement, magic and tactics without having to look into the manual even once. The learning system is comprehensive allowing you to get to the info you need quickly.

To be fair, this is not a hard core strategy sim. Wargamers who carry around foot-thick rules binders on troop placement and weather effects may find the complexity of play somewhat lacking.

The logical benchmark for *Kartia* is Final Fantasy Tactics, but despite cruder graphics, *Kartia* comes out on top. In the story mode, FFT allowed you to control only your own character, leaving the rest of the action to the railroaded precepts

of the AI. *Kartia* lets you control your whole team, giving the combat a more involved feel, like chess come alive.

The dark and menacing crispness of FFT actually works against it in pure gameplay terms, as the iconic simplicity of *Kartia* makes for an accessible game, and ultimately more immersive.

For the long-term perspective, the two player mode sets off the package nicely. Customisable by terrain, and by strength of sides, it presents an interpretation of the chess experience not seen since Archon. *Kartia* is a fantasy journey, one tactical RPG-heads will be relishing as the AD&D books they cling to in desperation crumble and turn to dust.

James Cottee

ALTERNATIVES

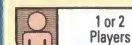
FINAL FANTASY TACTICS



Final Fantasy Tactics, Populous

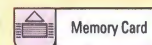
GAME FEATURES

PLAYERS

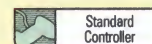


1 or 2
Players

ACCESSORIES



Memory Card



Standard
Controller

PlayStation

04

△○×□

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	Simple, functional, medieval
■ SOUND:	★★★	Epic orchestration befits the fielding of armies
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	Like chess with magic spells
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★	Not exactly Advanced Squad Leader, folks
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★	It's hard to get tired of thrashing your friends

■ OVERALL
It's not Final Fantasy
Tactics. It's better

87

PERCENT

POINT BLANK 2

The adventures of Don and Dan continue in spectacular fashion

The latest in a never ending slew of Japanese games set in theme parks, *Point Blank 2* takes up where the first game left off, providing you with mindless interactive violence at the hands of a toy gun. This game will turn your PlayStation into a shooting gallery, where you can blow away inanimate object and fluffy animal alike, safe from prosecution and remorse.



VARIOUS SETTINGS

The settings and characters that tie together the various subgames are largely irrelevant, but noteworthy in that the turnip-headed antagonists resemble evil, colonial versions of Ernie and Bert. Presumably the Children's Television Workshop found frown on their champions of harmonious, er, cohabitation promoting a game where the children it's aimed at hold and fire a gun quickly and accurately to succeed.

Which is a pity, because the game is surprisingly educational. One stage has you firing at numbers that must be the correct answers to simple arithmetic.

Others have you telling the difference between different animals, between shapes and colours, even between civilians and terrorists. Such moral and correct reactions must be second nature, as opposed to the plodding pace of PBS's vanguard of preschool entertainment.

Point Blank 2 is compatible with Namco's G-Con controller, a light gun with a video-feedback socket thing which offers pixel-perfect targetting. The Japanese model came in stylish black, but because the controller looks a little too realistic, the local model is an inoffensive grey.

Still, it's the best quality light gun on the market, and will in all likelihood be included with the game. You can never have too many G-CONs, which among other uses offer a stress & mess free alternative to the dying water pistol.

All menu screens are operated by pointing and shooting with your gun, and as such offer seamless connection with the gameplay by using the same part of your brain. In one menu, dozens of clones of the safari-suited Don and Dan drift up the screen holding balloons.

Shooting them instead of the buttons induces cries of pain. Shooting the balloon sends them plummeting back down. This blend of interactive detail and whimsy pervades the game.



▲ The mini-levels are much more complex, requiring you to co-ordinate your eyes to more rapid movement, colourful objects, and even sound. The end result is a delightful and challenging sequel

Like in the original, play consists of shooting the required number of targets within the time & ammunition limits. The challenge extends from simply shooting everything on the screen, or the same target repeatedly, to more exacting requirements.

Such as blasting numbered squares in ascending order, or a single target with a single shot, or barnyard animals based on their recorded sounds. There are about forty different tasks, each sufficiently different to the others to provoke the feeling of being a genuinely different game.

For single players, a smorgasboard of options are laid before you. The Arcade Mode is arcade-perfect, with all the home-console benefits of continues and heavy pockets. Endurance mode, for one or two players, will test how many consecutive boards you can clear.

Each level complete lets Dr Don (or Dr Dan) climb the next story of a huge totem-pole like tower. Success will let you rise above the clouds (don't forget to shoot the vulture in the background), failure will defenestrate you in no short order. Even tragedy and loss in *Point Blank* are treated with a slapstick, yet sinister light-heartedness.



ERNIE AND BERT

Ready please Mr Music...

DR DON AND DR DAN



Accused of many things, from promoting homosexuality in the impressionable young to the unnatural scourge of pigeon fetishists, Ernie and Bert are undoubtedly the first contact for two generations with domestic conflict. Laying bare the eternal struggle between order and chaos, between Yin and Yang, between the anally retentive and the orally fixated.

Bert is uptight, orderly, nay, fussy. His favourite food is porridge. His favourite animal- the pigeon. His favourite nuber? 6. Everything about him is boring, straight and square.

Ernie, his flatmate, is easy-going, manipulative, and an instigator. It's the easiest thing in the world to get Bert's goat, but that doesn't stop Ernie taunting, tricking and cheating Bert.

But are Dr Don and Dr Dan similar to their g-rated counterparts? They look the same, the felt school of character design lending itself well to cheesy CG sequences.

They live in the same house (shoot it around 80 times and you can demolish it, to reveal them sharing a bath!), but occupy the same mindset, thus betraying the homage.

Ernie and Bert are complete opposites. Don and Dan are the same guy with different heads.

ERNIE AND BERT



MODES OF PLAY

Party Mode is what it's all about. Commentary on the rude-headed safari guys is more satisfying when shared amongst a group of trigger happy chums. While only two guns can be used at once, this is enough for competitive play. A tag team mode allows for larger numbers.

The Training Mode provides every board from the game categorised by the type of task it entails. You can practice any game at any difficulty, with a statistical graph charting your performance.

Another concept borrowed from the Point Blank One is a built-in adventure game. Another way of getting variety out of what is essentially a shooting gallery, it seeks to bridge a series of tasks, and link them into the broader, more rewarding context of a quest.

Fun Park mode sees you, the young protagonist, prancing about like the



giddy little scamp you are, engaged in your oh so favourite of pastimes, shooting galleries.

The cartoon-like cinematics paint a friendly picture, save for the black handgun you carry everywhere. The implausible pretext takes shape when you are accosted by the king.

This playing card anachronism tells you his anguish over misplacing the princess while he was in the bathroom (complete with toilet flush sound effect).

This sets the stage for your mission - do exactly what you would have done anyway, ie. Run through the park and complete all the shooting games while asking of the princess' whereabouts.

The attention to detail is above par. For instance, in the space mission stage, your ship is called the "GUNBARREL", a two pronged anime reference, and your job consists largely of wasting Galagas.

These primary-coloured space insects feature as part of Namco's larger 20th anniversary celebrations. Essentially

'POINT BLANK 2 IS MORE OF THE SAME; MORE STAGES, MORE VARIETY'



▲ Point Blank 2 has many scenes from the original to maintain its wacky and exciting atmosphere



an outrageous party game, *Point Blank 2* is more of the same; more stages, more variety and challenge.

Point Blank One was widely criticised for being just a little bit too easy, but this has been corrected. For those who are neither a child nor retarded, the insane level of play stands ready to flaunt your inadequacies to within an inch of your life.

Aside from the increased difficulty, there is also the matter of variety. There are several new types of stages, and of course there'll be the option to buy it with a G-CON light gun, so even if you bought the first game, it may still be worth a look for the extra gun and the two-player mayhem it brings.

The difficulty is scalable, and there's still easy stuff for beginners. It's all just an excuse to shoot at the screen and laugh like a loon. If you have friends and/or a sense of humour, *Point Blank 2* is looking like a must-have.

James Cottee

ALTERNATIVES

TIME CRISIS



Point Blank 1, Time Crisis, Poy Poy

GAME FEATURES

PLAYERS



1 or 2
Players

ACCESSORIES



Memory Card



Standard
Controller

PlayStation

04

△○×□

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	Everything looks like a cut-out, which is the idea
■ SOUND:	★★★★	Functional, catchy, pulse-pounding
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	Point and shoot. And shoot. And shoot
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★★★	As hard as a drill sergeant dipped in viagra
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★★	Such a game is infectious and persistent

OVERALL

It takes the joy of shooting things and magnifies it tenfold

93

PERCENT

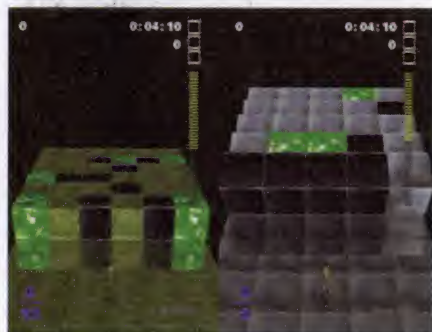
KURUSHI FINAL

Test your IQ in this challenging new puzzle game

Now here's a game that intelligent gamers can sink their teeth into. Puzzle games have been very far and few between on the PlayStation, and those of us who enjoy them are unfortunately left with unpalatable drivel that smacks of Tetris clonage.

Thankfully, *Kurushi Final* is a game that does not disappoint. In fact, many puzzle fans will look upon this game as one of those rare blessings to the genre, bringing some measure of meaning to the phrase "when it rains, it pours". Indeed, *Kurushi Final* is that good.

Kurushi Final is the sequel to a puzzle game that, in retrospect, received a rather undeserved lukewarm welcome from the industry.



With a little over a year now having past since that time, it is hoped that the market will approach it with a slightly more open mind than before. The game was developed by Sugar and Rockets, the division within SCEI that was also responsible for the quirky - but relatively unknown to Australia - Yarudora series.

Sony of Japan have given every indication *Kurushi Final* will be the last of the series, so all of you puzzle fans out there should be mindful of the fact that should you want the game, you'd better pick it up because Sony of Australia is not known to supply these kinds of games for any protracted period of time.

INDIANA JONES, EAT YOUR HEART OUT

The concept behind *Kurushi Final* is pretty much the same as before. You are standing on a cliff constructed of cubes again, and a barrage of cubes is rolling rather slowly (at first) towards you, threatening to either flatten you or push you over the edge.

Standing between you and instant death is your ability to destroy these cubes, but this ability can only be practiced within limits such as time and space. Basically, your ultimate goal is to eliminate all of these marauding cubes in order to progress to the next wave of cubes to destroy.



▲ The puzzles in *Kurushi Final* are as daunting and clinical as this picture looks: they are huge, and they can scare the willies out of the most persistent intellectual

The gameplay mechanics, however, are nowhere near as simple as they sound. You see, each row of blocks progress towards you with singular, incremental steps.

Between each step is a time delay, within which you have to run next to a block, place a detonator on the square directly in front of it, and then blow it up once the block rolls on top of it. These steps have to be repeated until every block is destroyed.

Obviously, it will be impossible to destroy all of the blocks if you can only use this ability once at a time, so there are special 'bonus blocks' that make life slightly easier for you.

That is, when you destroy one of these little green bonus blocks, it will leave a mark on that spot, and with the press of the Δ button, it will place a detonator on every square immediately around it.

As a further complication, if you happen to detonate a Black cube, the end-row of cubes on the cliff will disappear, meaning that you have less space to move around in.

PUZZLED?

Deeper than your average Tetris

DEVIL DICE



Where does *Kurushi Final* fit on the puzzling landscape? You'd be forgiven for thinking that all puzzle games are a simple clone of Tetris, because the simple truth is that there are quite a lot of these clones.

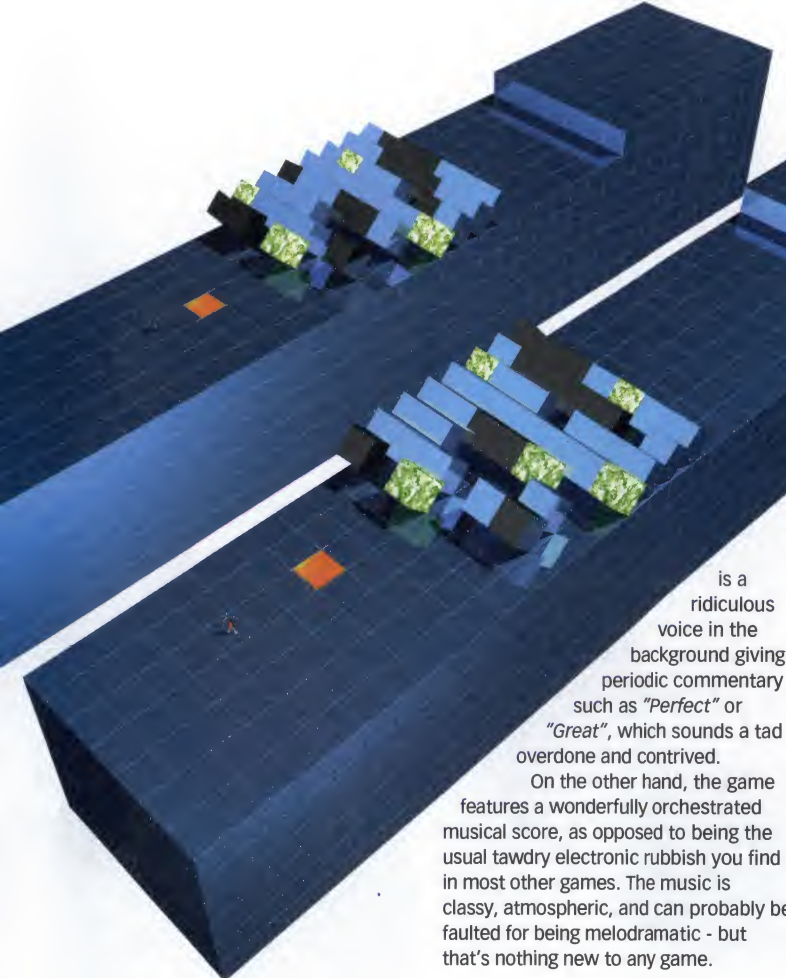
Forget games like Puzzle Bobble or Puzzle Fighter - games like Devil Dice and *Kurushi Final* are where the real innovations have been made, since they're the only ones to truly exploit three-dimensional movement in an innovative way in a puzzle game.

BUST A MOVE 4



PUZZLE FIGHTER





is a ridiculous voice in the background giving periodic commentary such as "Perfect" or "Great", which sounds a tad overdone and contrived.

On the other hand, the game features a wonderfully orchestrated musical score, as opposed to being the usual tawdry electronic rubbish you find in most other games. The music is classy, atmospheric, and can probably be faulted for being melodramatic - but that's nothing new to any game.

GRAPHICS. SOUNDS. A PUZZLE FAN CRAVETH NOT THESE THINGS

As with all puzzle games, the focus of *Kurushi Final* is not on fantastic visuals or anything else of that kind of superficial value. Graphically, the game is very simple but very effective.

It can be accused of low polygon counts with flat-shaded textures and horrendous character designs. However, the movement of the character and the blocks is smooth enough, and the camera is suitably placed to convey the action on the screen.

The default camera position is perhaps a little too close-up, meaning that you can't see how far you've got left before you fall over the edge. This can be easily fixed with the different camera settings in the options menu.

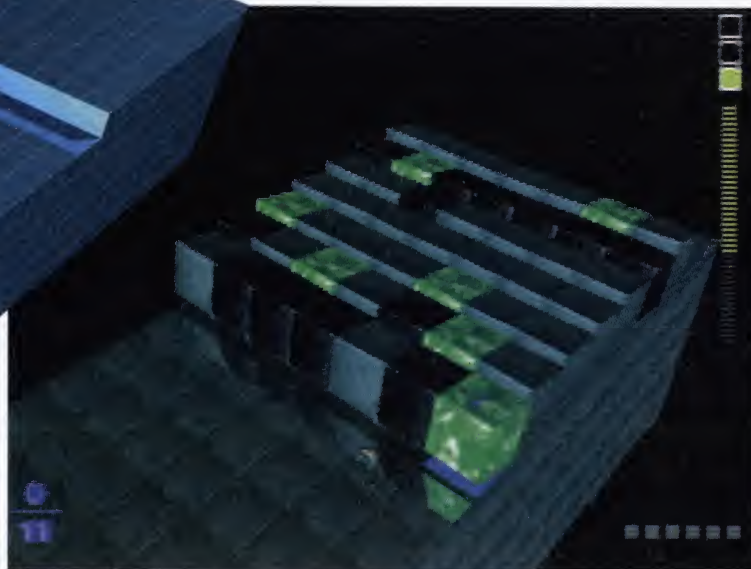
The sounds, on the other hand, are surprisingly good. On one hand, there

A LITTLE TOO HARD?

Ultimately, if a puzzle game wants any measure of acceptance from fans of the genre, it has to be creative and addictive. Games like Tetris and Devil Dice are notorious for making you go on and on, and before you realise it, you feel as though you've completely drained yourself of your life essence and it's about 4 o'clock in the morning.

Kurushi Final definitely satisfies that requirement to a tee. The game moves at a suitable pace, the variations such as the Black and Green blocks make the gameplay balanced and dynamic, and there aren't any of those dodgy unpredictable elements that spoiled games like Wetrax or Tetrisphere on the Nintendo 64.

However, deriving enjoyment out of *Kurushi Final* requires getting over its main hindrance, and boy is it a big one.



▲ Some of the blocks in *Kurushi* are arranged in deviously mind-bending positions

'THE TIME AND SPACE LIMITATIONS ARE QUITE HARSH, IF NOT CRUEL'

Kurushi Final is a hard game to get into. The time and space limitations are quite harsh, if not cruel; and the puzzles are incredibly anal. The game is so difficult, in fact, that even most experienced puzzlers will probably have trouble coming to grips with it.

It is unfortunate that games like *Kurushi Final* aren't really considered to be entirely mainstream, because a lot of thought has been put into the design of the game's mechanics. Its main credit is that it is original.

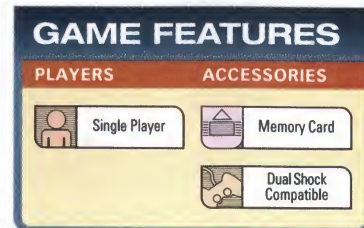
Hard core puzzle game fans will be delighted by this game, especially from its alternative game modes like survival, separate puzzles, and so on.

However, the majority of people will feel somewhat threatened by the brain power that is demanded in this game. Love it or hate it, *Kurushi Final* deserves praise.

Alielle Sin



▲ *Kurushi Final* requires you to destroy all of the blocks before they roll you over the edge. Avoid the black ones in the process



PlayStation

04

△ ○ × □

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	Simple and clear, but nothing flashy
■ SOUND:	★★★	Beautifully atmospheric, but a little overdone
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★	It has all the modes that a puzzle game needs
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★★★	One of the hardest games you'll ever play
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★	Unless you're a fan, the frustration may prove too much

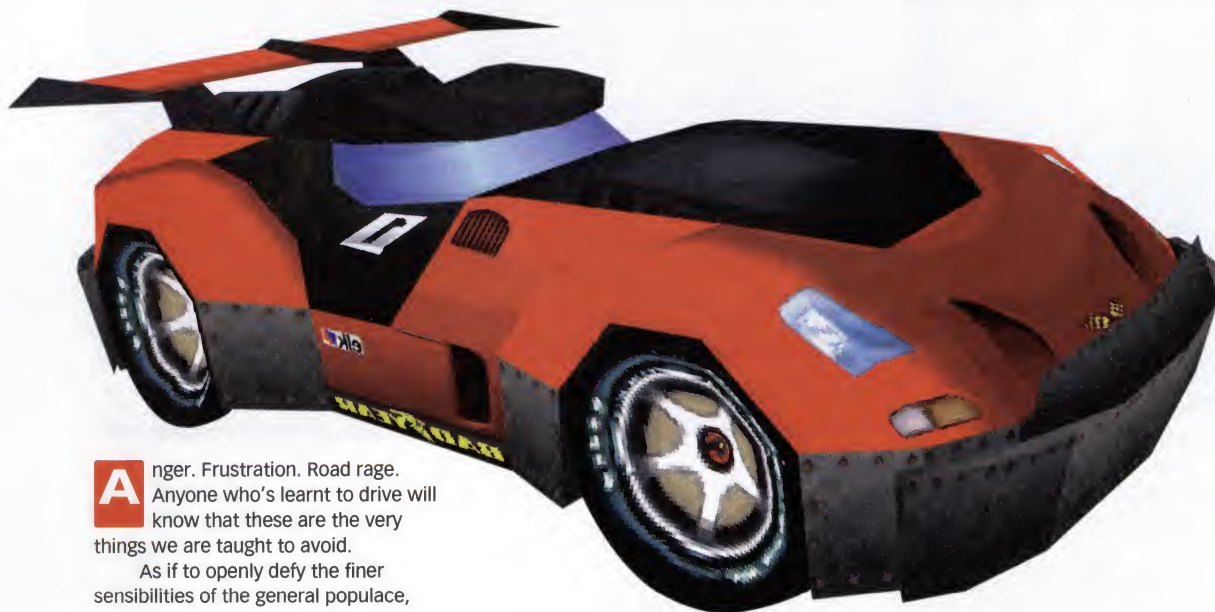
■ OVERALL
A great puzzle game whose only fault is that it's very, very hard

84

PERCENT

CARMAGEDDON

Road rage gets redefined in this PlayStation racing thriller



Anger. Frustration. Road rage. Anyone who's learnt to drive will know that these are the very things we are taught to avoid.

As if to openly defy the finer sensibilities of the general populace, *Carmageddon* is a game that warmly embraces the darker fantasies of driving - being able to mow down pesky pedestrians with reckless disregard being one of them. Already having made a name for itself in the PC gaming scene, the question now is whether or not the thrills can be recreated on the PlayStation.

NOT AS BRAINLESS AS YOU THINK

The premise of *Carmageddon* is simple: you race around in various locations that happened to be filled with zombies and aliens, and should you wish to, you can plough right through them.



▲ Glamorous sci-fi special effects and gratuitous lashings of blood. There's little else left to appeal to the male mind as far as 'fun' is concerned

Several other game modes are available to you, such as competing to see who can rack up the most roadkills, who can drive through the checkpoints, who can eliminate the most components, and so on.

Obviously, the focus of this game is not quite so much on racing as is the case with, say *Gran Turismo* or *V Rally 2*. Rather, the focus is more on mindless destruction, punishing collisions, and wild obstacle courses of the Destruction Derby or Vigilante 8 kind. Racing just 'happens' to be there as a bonus for those of you who desire a clear focus to the game. Much like

Quake II, *Carmageddon* had to be scaled back from the PC original in order to cater for the PlayStation's hardware. The final result was a surprisingly good overall conversion.

Graphically, *Carmageddon* is an example of how the PlayStation can be used effectively in displaying large amounts of detailed objects without any significant sacrifice made to the framerate or general performance of the game.

Each of the tracks are splendid 3D constructs, allowing the player relative freedom to roam about in locations such as jungles, futuristic cities, ski resorts, and country-side farms. The intricacy of the geometry in each track is really



THE DEVELOPER

Sam Forrest from SCI

CARMAGEDDON



PSM: The PC is obviously a more powerful machine than the PlayStation. How did you go about deciding what was to go in and what was to be left out of the PSX version of *Carmageddon*?

SF: Basically we tried not to leave anything out. Obviously the two machines excel in different areas, and so we simplified things very slightly in some areas, whilst insuring nothing was really lost.

PSM: Has the censorship issue phased you guys at all? Have they hindered development?

SF: It is a nuisance, it means we have to create multiple versions, populated with different pedestrians to suit each country's censorship laws. The sad thing is, if the half the people that have moaned about *Carmageddon*'s content actually played the game they would realise it is all fairly harmless black humour.

PSM: How much better would *Carmageddon* be if you could develop it using some of the PlayStation 2 hardware?

SF: *Carmageddon* on the PlayStation 2 would be amazing. In the PlayStation version, where the machine does not have a great maths facility we have to be very picky about what objects in the game have full physics applied to them, on the PlayStation 2 everything will have full physics, and you can add to this the phenomenal amount of display polygons and effects. This would be an absolute ideal platform for *Carmageddon*.

becoming the standard of PlayStation games of this type, particularly with games like *Driver* being available.

The freedom to drive anywhere in a realistic multi-directional map provides excellent flexibility to the gameplay, which is evident in the numerous game modes on offer.

A COMBINATION OF 2D AND 3D

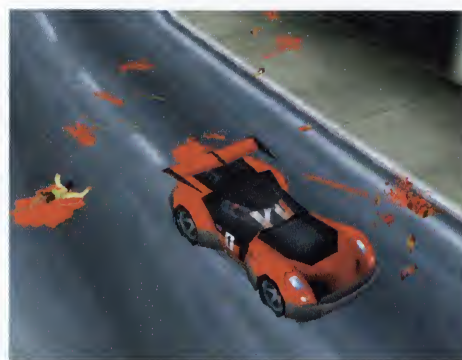
The cars themselves animate well, and the only discrepancy worth mentioning is the slight break-up and slowdown that occurs when there's a lot happening on the screen.

And by that, it is meant that you've got around 8 or 9 zombies being smashed to kingdom come, with their limbs being tossed about in the air, and their blood spraying all over the place.

It's interesting to note that the number of moving objects being thrown around on screen is being achieved by using a combination of polygonal pedestrians and sprite-based limbs. Sure, it looks out-of-place and blocky, but it's not something that detracts when you're travelling along at a good pace.

Carmageddon's merits as a game will depend largely on what one is looking for in a game. Essentially, its gameplay is not dissimilar from that of *Vigilante 8* or *Destruction Derby*, except its game engine allows for quite a large variety of game modes.

This is obviously important for the game's lifespan and replay value. The gameplay itself is quite enjoyable, firstly for the fact that the visuals are up to



'ITS GAME ENGINE ALLOWS FOR QUITE A LARGE VARIETY OF GAME MODES'

scratch; and secondly because the control interface and responsiveness are all quite acceptable.

THE GORE FACTOR: IS IT WORTH COMPLAINING ABOUT?

The selling point of *Carmageddon*, however, is the fact that you do get to crash into animate objects other than cars. Obviously, many people will find the idea a little perverse. However, if you can get past the shock value, the manner in which the game has been structured around this novel feature is quite intelligent.

For instance, the game features different zombie characters, weapons, and power-ups, which all

affect the outcome of the game. From a gamer's perspective, this is great for encouraging you to be more competitive both in single player and two-player mode, which is something that most equivalent games cannot boast.

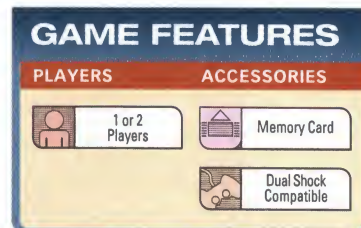
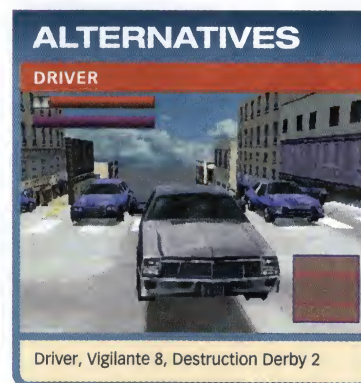
Overall, *Carmageddon* is a game that is bound to please fans of car-related mayhem. The extra game features being offered by *Carmageddon* put it a slight step ahead of its equivalent titles. Just don't let the gore get the better of you in deciding whether or not to purchase this title, because it's really no big deal.

Kevin Cheung

▲ The streets are filled with interactive moving objects, making the game all that much more action-packed



▲ To get around the censors, SCI have turned the pedestrians into zombies



PlayStation

04

△ ○ × □

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Excellent movement, lots of on-screen objects
■ SOUND:	★★★	Music and effects are all suitably atmospheric
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★	Different game modes mean excellent variety
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★	A decent range of difficulty is offered throughout
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★	There is enough here to satisfy any motor-maniac

■ OVERALL
Get past the hype and censorship quibbles, and *Carmageddon* is really good fun

86
PERCENT

CASTROL HONDA SUPER BIKING

EA take to the super-circuits with the leading superbike team, but will it take the throne of the motorcycle sim?

Wow. Hmm... A motorcycle sim. Great. In fact, a superbike sim. Fantastic. EA have finally released the PlayStation version of *Castrol Honda Super Biking* and we're here to tell you how good or bad it is. *Castrol Honda Super Biking* is a title with promise and pedigree but unfortunately lets down the team in a big way.

The idea is that you are racing for the Castrol Honda Superbike team in the World Superbike Championship. You get to ride bike 1, while Aaron Slight (the current top rider for the Castrol Honda team) is relegated to bike 2. You race your way through 14 circuits of varying length to determine who will win outright and who will win the manufacturer's title.

For each race there is a practice session, followed by a qualifying session, which is followed in turn by the race itself. Race lengths can be anywhere from 3 laps up to a 100km race (between 25 - 40 laps), so you can have some decent variety to the length of the races.

In addition, the game also offers the option to race any of the circuits as a single race, or try out a training session.. This involves you trailing another rider around and around the circuit at a relative snail's pace, with the other guy whingeing if you get too close.

Oh, and there's a two player mode as well, but this game is not really worth it unless you know someone else who is as much a fan of Superbikes as you surely must be to buy this game.

EVEN THE CLIPPING HAS CLIPPING

This title was meant to be the best simulation of motorcycle racing. Unfortunately if this was the best on offer, I might have almost thrown my PlayStation in the bin.

The graphics are decidedly average. The first circuit I raced seemed to have a



▲ *Castrol Honda Super Biking* offers a variety of in-game perspectives to create as realistic a simulation of motorbike racing as possible. The external view is somewhat sparse, but the first-person mode looks much more detailed

fairly slow frame-rate, especially compared to other racers available now. I realised that this was actually fast for the game when I discovered that several of the other tracks suffered from even worse slowdown.

The tracks, although from all parts of the globe (except, mysteriously, for Philip Island - what's wrong with Australia, EA?), are uniformly bland and dull. They may be modelled on the real thing, but none of the big names that you may know are here so they may as well be made up circuits.

I understand the developers went for realism in their colour scheme, but unlike other numerous attempts where this was successful, *Castrol Honda Super Biking* looked drab and all the tracks were the same.

Making things worse is the fact that the amount of clipping was

incredible. Some circuits were almost unplayable in parts because of all the crazy white lines flashing all over the place.

The game looks like it should have been released with an earlier generation of PlayStation games. It looks quite unfinished considering the rough edges and the few buggy sections where you can actually get your bike off the track and into the surrounding countryside, which wreaks havoc with the scenery.

THE NEED FOR SPEED CONTINUES

Because of the blandness of the circuits, and the low frame rate, *Castrol Honda Super Biking* doesn't provide the most important element of bike sims - a sensation of speed. At no point in the game do you feel like you're cruising at several hundred kilometres per hour. In the lower levels of difficulty, because of



CASTROL PRIDE

<http://www.castrol.com>

CASTROL TEAM



As I played the game, I noticed that the other Castrol Honda Superbike team member would always finish first or second (and only second if I came first). This seemed odd, since you want a bit of a challenge from ALL of your opponents not just one, so I surfed on <http://www.castrol.com>.

I discovered that the results are actually quite similar to real life, with this team being one of the most successful ever.

How do I know? Well, they don't hide it. Every opportunity is taken to show photos like this and little boastful facts about them winning this or that.

It's good to know the game is based on a winning team but you start to understand why the game is so red, green and white when you see their website... A game that is more advertising than entertainment - I'll let you be the judge.



▲ It's important to note that the game looks very different when it's actually in motion

'CASTROL DOESN'T PROVIDE THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF BIKE SIMS - A SENSATION OF SPEED'

the little interaction you have with your console, you just seem to be cruising along. The only viewpoint that comes close to making you feel like you're on a powerful machine, is the inside rider view. Unfortunately, this view at the same time reduces the amount of situational awareness and you'll crash into things more often.

The sound isn't much better. Although there is background music when navigating through the



menus, there is absolutely none in game at all. Instead, the developers treat you to nothing but the sound of your engine, the crowds and the rise and fade of your competitor's machines.

One redeeming feature is the modelling of the motorcycle and rider. These are treated as the separate objects they are, so when you crash, you can see rider and bike come apart in a variety of ways.

Also, your rider crouches, leans and sits back at all the right moments and this looks good. Hitting a straight and having the front wheel rise up in front of you as you push the throttle to the limit is extremely satisfying.

SUPER-HARD RACING

Superbike racing is an exceptionally hard sport and *Castrol Honda Super Biking* is no worse off. To combat this, the developers included six difficulty settings that affect your opponents' AI as well as giving you leeway as you race.

These combine with a myriad of options that slowly become unavailable as you progress through the difficulty ratings. For example, you can't turn the Engine Overheat, Tyre Wear, Penalties or Lose Rear Wheel options off if you're playing as Professional or Ace.

However, all of these are available plus

being able to turn Wheelies on or off, and aids such as Auto Brakes, Help Arrows and Steering Assist, if you're playing in the lower ranks.

This is where the tragedy arises: you either play as Rookie or Novice with Braking Assist on and put yourself to sleep, or play as Pro or Ace and get so frustrated with how hard it is that you'll probably throw your console through your TV. What the challenge is, is to find the combination of difficulty level and settings that meet your skill level.

If one were to describe the experience offered by *Castrol Honda Super Biking*, I'd say the graphics are so dull and the game so easy on the lower difficulty ratings and the frame-rate so average for a 1998 title, that I fell asleep playing this game - seriously, asleep!

Now, as most of you readers would realise, I love racing games, so this is an amazing occurrence. The only thing that brightens up this game is the advertising billboards scattered around the circuits.

Unless you are a real Superbike fan (and don't mix Superbikes with the things Doohan and cronies ride), you are going to waste your money on this poor black disc. Don't do it to yourself.

Andrew Parsons

ALTERNATIVES

MOTO RACER 1



Moto Racer 1 & 2

GAME FEATURES

PLAYERS

ACCESSORIES



1 or 2
Players



Memory Card



Dual Shock
Compatible

PlayStation

04

△○×□

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	Remember Sports Car GT - this is its motorbike equal
■ SOUND:	★	No in game music, and some sort of buzzing sound
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★	Mind numbing in parts
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★★★	Ace mode is the hardest racing sim I've ever seen
■ LIFESPAN:	★★	Won't take too long to get bored

OVERALL

Only for the REALLY hardcore Superbike fan - preferably fans of Castrol/Honda as well

54

PERCENT

DRIVER

A slick cops and robbers sim is about to take the PSX by storm

Once in a while there comes a driving game that the most avid car hater can get into. The last one was the violent Destruction Derby series, in which the player raced primarily, but with more emphasis on intense carnage and spectacular accidents than most racing sims.

Players of games can get away with this kind of rash behaviour so long as the action is restricted to the TV screen. This is probably why the team that brought us Destruction Derby decided to go the extra leg to create a new, much more serious game about driving.

Driver has all the essential ingredients for a top notch driving simulator: a complex storyline, great artificial intelligence and an engine to drool for. At the end of the day it is all about racing from one point to another in as little time as possible, but there are so many factors to be considered here that no two plays are ever the same.

Driver is the game to spawn a whole genre of its own within the



▲ A superb game, *Driver* puts you in the shoes of a getaway driver. The attention to detail brings the game to life with traffic and urban furnishings to negotiate all the way

very broad range of PlayStation driving games. The closest any other has come to this level of perilous realism would have to be *The Need For Speed 4: High Stakes*, which also involves high speed chases between the cops and the crims.

Grand Theft Auto also leaps to mind when playing *Driver*, bearing the same heated illegal action and untamed gameplay. *Driver* outdoes them both.

High Stakes concentrated on racing regular circuits and GTA on the other hand was all about being a petty thieving criminal. *Driver* is what you'd get if you crossed the two.

UNDER THE MOB

In *Driver*, the player assumes the role of an undercover cop, as explained in the brief, almost Spartan full motion video introduction. The FMV isn't supposed to be spectacular but its purpose is to lay out the plot and establish a gritty atmosphere. Your boss is telling you that he wants you to act

FILM DIRECTOR

Choreographed Car Crashes



The things you can do with your PlayStation! After any mission, successful or not, you may choose to view the replay of it and save it to the memory card.

What's more, you can direct the camera's behaviour throughout the whole show. You can put tripod-mounted cameras wherever you want, attach a camera to your vehicle or that of your pursuer or just leave it up to the auto-director.

It is a fairly simple little feature but it opens up big doors for anyone with a bit of time on their hands. You can create a truly cinematic masterpiece, then watch it, tweak it and show your friends, again and again. Blues Brothers eat your hearts out!





as a low-life driver for a while. You must do the dirty work for small-time crime syndicates, to worm your way towards hotter information up the kingpin ladder. The intermittent FMV never lets you forget that being "under" is a lot like walking the thin ice on a lake filled with sharks.

The first stage of the game involves proving yourself worthy to some crim. In a car park you are given a list of things to perform – 180 spin, 360, burnout, reverse 180, brake test, handbrake, a lap of the parking lot and you also have to do a slalom run around the concrete pillars – all in under a minute.

The mandatory passing of this test will teach you about the controls of the car, which are a little bit different to most driving sims. It's also to let you know that the rest of the



game isn't going to be easy. There are two buttons to use for accelerating. One is for normal acceleration and the other puts you in top gear. This second accelerator is just great for doing doughnuts and leaving clouds of smoke behind as you screech away in a hasty escape. At full speed there is no difference between the two buttons.

There are also two buttons used for braking. The second is a handbrake. The normal brakes are surely the safest way to come to a halt, but for sharp turns and spin-outs, nothing beats the handbrake.

CHECK YOUR MESSAGES

When you finally beat the car park stage, you go back to your dingy little flat and check your answering machine. This is where you get your jobs.

Sometimes you'll be lucky enough to receive two or three messages. This is where the game's design gets good. Once you have chosen a mission of the



▲ There are several dirt tracks to practice on in the sub-game menu, as well as many mini-games

few that are available to you, you won't be able to choose the others unless you had saved the game at that point. Do more work for one crime boss than another and they will prefer you, and the crims you neglect stop offering you jobs.

To start with you only get odd jobs. Meet some gangster down at the dock to exchange suitcases. Drive a ute with a crate full of explosives across town before the cops catch up. Go here, pick up some guys, bring them back to the safehouse without bringing a "tail".

As the game goes on, your criminal superiors will move to bigger cities. Then you'll get harder jobs: chasing people, busting captives out of squad cars, stealing cop cars and even ram raiding a chain of restaurants.

THE DRIVING MODEL

Driver's driving engine was clearly based on that of Destruction Derby, but it has obviously had a great deal of touching up. For starters, there is an option that toggles the auto-handbraking function. With auto-handbraking off, the car will never over-turn and you therefore are required to press the handbrake button to achieve a slide around a corner.

Most of the cars you drive are huge American freighters which handle like semi-trailers. You won't be a pro straight away. On the up side, it means that the driving engine involved will last any freak ages due to its surprising depth.

The vehicles lurch about the screen with very realistic suspension modelling. Powerslides are the key to cutting the corners and the car really tips when fighting the centrifugal force.

SUN, RAIN, SNOW

Cool weather effects

SUNNY



The weather is one well polished facet of Driver. While the earlier missions are all in broad daylight with the sun beating down on the dry tarmac, it does rain occasionally. When it rains the car's handling is affected and the reflections on the road's surface add that extra touch of realism to the game. At night they look even better.

Some missions are cleverly set just before dawn or dusk and you can actually see the sky changing colour. The gradual transition of day to night or vice versa is so subtle, you don't even notice it, except for when the other vehicles turn their headlights on or off.

NIGHT TIME



RAIN



RAIN



▲ Driver is all about enacting your wildest urban automotive fantasies. The cops will follow you absolutely anywhere

THE CITIES

Tanner, the guy you play, works four American cities, each one larger and more gangster-ridden than the last. They are Miami, San Francisco, Los Angeles and finally New York, where you get to thwart an attempt to assassinate the President. Ironically, I felt like a big failure after beating that mission.

Each metropolis has its own map, varying in size from forty to seventy blocks – and these are American blocks we are talking about. Buildings of all shapes and sizes come out of the distance as you tear along the highway, park, back alley or whatever public place you choose to defile.

Unfortunately the pedestrians always manage to run clear of your path at the last moment. We'll just leave that kind of pointless brutality to games like *Carmageddon*.

There are plenty of landmarks to be seen defining each capital city and if you're familiar with any of them you're bound to feel right at home. The buildings are all finely detailed – an effort enhanced by the foreground jag elimination. San Francisco sports its famous cable cars and Miami even has a monorail.

THE DAMAGE FACTOR

There is no speedometer in *Driver*. In fact, there are no dashboard indicators at all. The only things you have to work from are the two bars at the top of the screen. One measures your crime count and the other keeps track of damage. One of the great things about *Driver* is that until your damage bar peaks, your car's performance is unaffected by mishaps. Escaping the law is possible.

Your tyres never wear too thin either. Burning rubber is a big part of *Driver*. The pale smoke that churns out of the rear of your vehicle is as impressive as the black clouds that pour out of your bonnet when you treat your car too badly. No pixels, just filthy smoke. Beautiful.

The attention to damage detail is impeccable. There is gradual damage for different parts of every vehicle in the game. If you nick another car just slightly, you'll get a scratch and a few shards of metal and glass will fly from the point of



▲ In the later cities, Police cars will literally stop at nothing to bring you down. High speed ramming is one of their favourite methods for bringing justice to the people

impact. If you ram someone in their side at full speed, you will both receive ugly craters and bits will fill the screen.



THE LAW

The many cop cars patrolling the streets of each city make every job a heart-pounder. If they see you committing a crime (speeding, hitting another vehicle) they will give chase.

Fortunately there is radar on your screen. Cops show up on with their field of vision too, much like the radar in *Metal Gear Solid*. As long as your felony bar is empty, the cops won't try to stop you. When it fills up, you'll find road blocks everywhere.

THE SOUNDS

...are great! Burnouts are brought to life by their screeching and other cars beep at you as you sail past them on the wrong side of the street. Reflections have used a clever technique that distorts the beeping in accordance with the physics of sound. Oncoming beeps and sirens are

high pitched, whereas overtaken vehicles' sounds drop to a lower note.

Even when your car's engine is idle, you can still hear the bubble and splutter of the motor's restless liquids and the musical score can be silenced in the in-game menu.

In conclusion, *Driver* is everything you could want in a driving game. It contains a deep racing simulation and has all the carnage you could ask for besides. If you like to drive, get it now.

Hillous Lesslie



ALTERNATIVES

GRAND THEFT AUTO: LONDON 1969



Grand Theft Auto 1 and 2, Carmageddon, Destruction Derby 1&2, Courier Crisis

GAME FEATURES

PLAYERS

Single Player

ACCESSORIES

Memory Card

Dual Shock Compatible

PlayStation

04

△○×□

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	Lovely touches, but rough with a not-too-distant redraw point
■ SOUND:	★★★★	Excellent engine noises and superb crashes
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★★★	Escape the cops and catch the crims. GO, GO, GO!
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★★★	A broad range of challenges for all. The final stage will stick
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★★	There's nothing like it, and you'll always come back for more

OVERALL

A game that you can always come back to for a heart-thumping race to the death

93

PERCENT

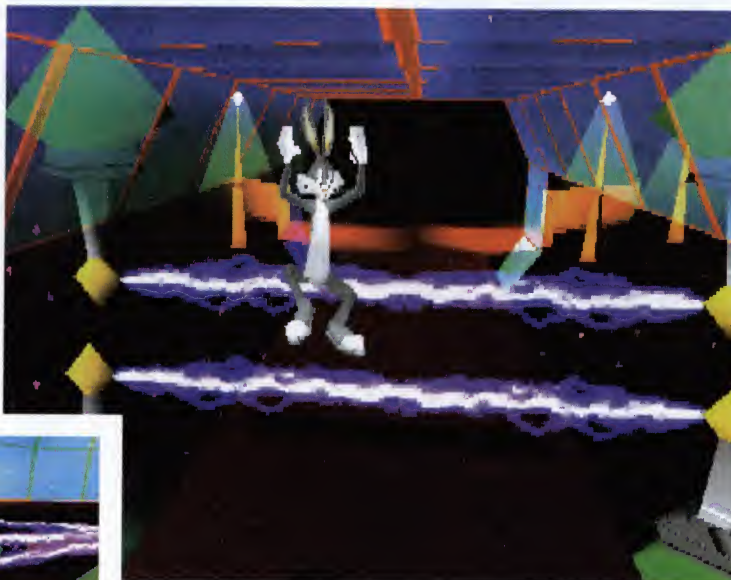
BUGS BUNNY: LOST IN TIME

Can this game be as timeless as the animated classics of old?

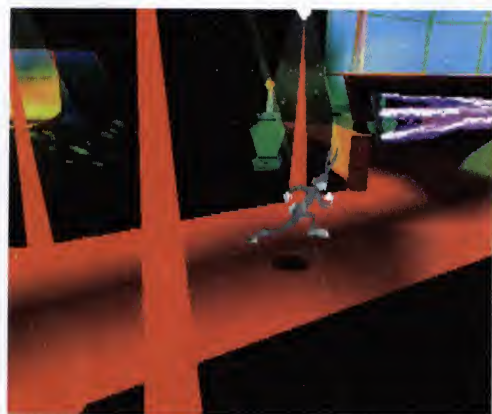
Warner Borthers is pushing for a major product recognition blitz as of the end of the millennium.

Whilst the stable of regognisable (and bankable) characters may not have any tangible connection to the cycle of years as, say, those lovable M&M's do, none the less they are on the spearhead of a blitz to win the hearts and minds of little kids who were born after the 1940s.

That's right, kids, Sylvester, Tweety, Daffy and the rest have been trying to dismember each other since the pre-war era. And yet in all that time nobody has produced a superior six-minute cartoon product to the original and best.



▲ Elmer snickered as he flicked the switch to the electric fence



'HE'S A WISE-CRACKING RABBIT WHO'S INVARIABLY SMARTER THAN WHOEVER HE'S UP AGAINST'

FLOGGING A DEAD HORSE

Even Warner Bros' efforts of late have been rather lame, trying to drag out now hackneyed visual cues, sound effects and violent sight gags long past their use by dates. Anyone remember Freakazoid? No, of course not.

It is into this climate that this new *Bugs Bunny* platformer enters. With a noble heritage, *Bugs* must fight to clear his name after a slew of recent debacles have drawn his once-proud lineage through the mud. Like *Space Jam*.

Despite the noble educational efforts of Sophie Lee and her successors,

it's possible that there are those who don't know who *Bugs Bunny* is. There's not much to know, he's a wise-cracking rabbit who's invariably smarter than whoever he's up against.

LOST IN TIME

The story begins with *Bugs* embarking on one of his trademark budget vacations, which involve him burrowing underground over vast distances. He pops up in front of a mysterious device, which appears to our one-track-mind hero to be a carrot juice dispenser. To anyone else it looks like a

HG Wells time machine. His unconcealed greed for that sweet, sweet orange nectar sees him activate it, sending the device hurtling towards some kind of hub screen.

As the letterboxing recedes, you find yourself astride the machine in a swirling vortex of time and energy. The arrow keys direct you past six different regions, presumably the areas you'll have to conquer to get back to your safe deposit box full of carrots.

Selecting an area takes you to the training stage, a common device in modern games to ground you in the



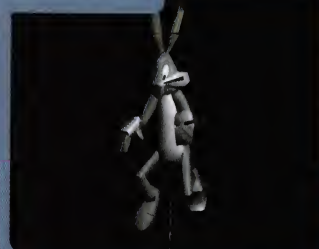
▲ Bugs Bunny seems to still have the ability to burrow holes in the most unlikely (and unrealistic) of places



3D TOONS

Converting Bugs into Polygons

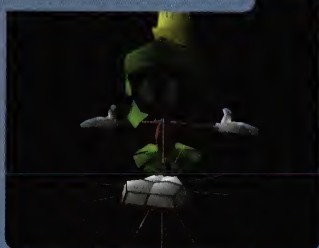
BUGS BUNNY



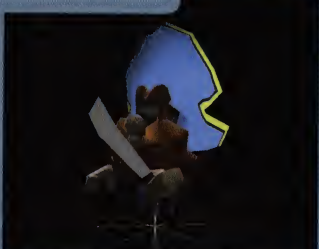
ELMER FUDD



MARVIN THE MARTIAN



YOSEMITE SAM



Bearing in mind that *Bugs Bunny*, as a cartoon, has always been a creature of the 2D world, it's wonderful to see what an excellent translation has been made of them into the 3D realm. It's a shame the characters don't appear all that large on the screen, because their designs are so timeless and unique.

mechanics of play before you jump right in and fall off the same cliff 99 times before you get it right. Just so you know that it really is your fault.

This place of nowhere and no time is home to Merlin. Wearing a propellor cap and an outrageous haunch, just like his image from the original cartoons, he explains to you at great length how to escape from the mess you're in.

You must roam from the stone age through all of recorded history, collecting golden carrots and alarm clocks as you go. These, you will find, are hidden on ingenious and highly linear courses filled with death traps, hostile creatures, and other recognisable Warner Bros icons.

Bugs isn't exactly new to adventures through the farthest reaches of time and space, so he takes all of this in his stride. Nothing fazes *Bugs*. His life is a never-ending sushi train of carrots and stupid, evil people to exploit. Nothing out of the ordinary.

Soon enough, the player is booted out of Merlin's castle. You have to earn each of the ten carrots scattered through this tiny level in order to reach the first real stage of the game.

Each carrot is hidden in such a way as to force you to master the controls and actions. These are actually quite varied, and do a good job at mimicking *Bugs*' behavior in the cartoons. For instance, when falling you can use *Bugs*' ears like propellers to slow your descent.



▲ The stages in *Bugs Bunny* are surprisingly detailed, which is great for the nostalgic cartoon atmosphere



Rabbit holes are scattered at strategic locations throughout the map, allowing you to burrow underground over any distance. Most of the introductory tasks involve you beating up Merlin's apprentice. This detail is used for comic effect, and makes a welcome take on the platform jumping motif.

The movement of the characters is true to form, and each is constructed of sufficient polygons to create an acceptable facsimile of their celluloid counterparts. They all look at home within their game world, certainly not like the pitiful men in suits who infest Westfield Shoppingtowns.

point in time, you will recognise the same feelings of frustration combined with the compulsion to try the level just one more time. But you won't get the thrill that comes with a product that is genuinely new, outstanding, or worthwhile.

So where does this leave the franchise? There hasn't been a funny *Bugs Bunny* cartoon in the past two generations. And whilst there is a huge backlog of cartoons on endless rotation every afternoon just before the game shows come on, the time will come when you've seen them all. This may be an excellent opportunity to grow up.

James Cottey

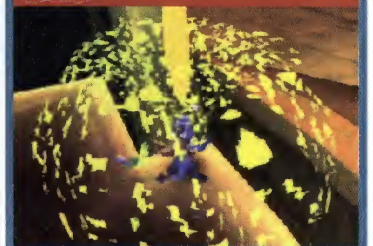
STRUCTURED BUNNY

From a critical viewpoint there are serious problems with the game's basic design and structure. It is competently put together, with acceptable limits observed in terms of difficulty, design, secrets, hidden areas, length, and even presentation.

What *Bugs Bunny: Lost In Time* does not offer is originality. 3D platformers like this one have been done before, and they've been done better. While this offers a competent addition to the vast stable of such games, but it gives you nothing new. If you've played any platform game before, at any

ALTERNATIVES

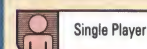
SPYRO



Spyro or Crash Bandicoot 1, 2, 3

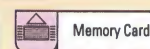
GAME FEATURES

PLAYERS

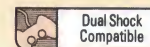


Single Player

ACCESSORIES



Memory Card



Dual Shock Compatible

PlayStation

04

△○×□

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	Strikingly similar to the original cartoons
■ SOUND:	★★	Offbeat orchestral stuff, also like the cartoons
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★	Another 3D platformer. Whoopie
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Frustrating. Difficult, yet unrewarding
■ LIFESPAN:	★★	This foul plastic will stain our fragile Earth for millennia

OVERALL

Best well before
November 1959

61

PERCENT

CROC 2

Croc is back and he still wants his other fang for Christmas

Argonaut are the latest to jump on the sequel bandwagon. With Gex and Crash both up to their third generations and Spyro already imminently arriving for the second time, the second game in the Croc series has hit our shelves and looks pretty nice.

In the original Croc, you had to go about rescuing the Gobboes who had been kidnapped. Now, the Gobboes are all happily ensconced in their villages, but are facing invaders of various kinds.

You begin happily playing beach volleyball with your Gobbo mates when you stumble over a message in a bottle from a neighbouring island that is being endangered by the Dantinis. Being the honourable, evil-hating crocodile you are, you leap to their rescue.

This first village, Sailor Village, sets the scene for the structure of the game. Each village you visit has 6 levels. Once you complete all six, which you can do in any order, you meet the boss level.

The game has been made a little easier. In Croc 1, if you were hit by an enemy, you'd lose any crystals you were carrying. If you weren't carrying any,



you were dead. It's as simple as that. Thankfully, the game uses a hearts system, and the crystals are left safely in your backpack.

This is because the crystals are credited to your Swap Meet Pete Credit Card and can be used to purchase handy tools and knick-knacks. The most expensive of these are Heart Pots.

These devices provide an extra damage spot to protect yourself from the enemy. Once bought, the spot is available throughout the game. Initially you begin with 3 heart



points, but collecting crystals and spending wisely could see you with 6, 7 or even more heart points - a handy thing indeed for later levels.

AMAZING LEVEL STYLES

The levels form an amazing cacophony of styles, including riding in mine carts, participating in a hover boat race (complete with inner tube squeaks as you rub against other boats), riding in a hang glider, and walking a snowman head along a dangerously curved route.

The game is in a word, CUTE. Besides having the classic big-eyed character design, you'll find such diversions as an ancient Gobbo fishing from the dock, along with a baby Gobbo jumping on a trampoline. In the Cossack Village you'll find a brat-pack who find it fun to turf a few snowballs at you.

Croc 2 is clearly designed for the younger crowd. However, those in the audience may find some of the levels a little on the difficult side, as the developers have really toughened up some aspects of the game up to make up for the looser approach to the level access. No complaints though, because this game is fun.

Rhys Jacobssen

▲ Not only is the whole game choking with unbearable cuteness, the graphics are up there with the best that the PlayStation has to offer

ALTERNATIVES

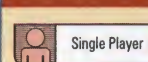
APE ESCAPE



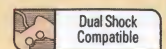
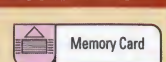
Ape Escape, Crash Bandicoot 3, Spyro

GAME FEATURES

PLAYERS



ACCESSORIES



PlayStation

04

△ ○ × □

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Simple textures provide for a clean looking game
■ SOUND:	★★★★	Cool music and extremely cute voices
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★	Same old platform genre - nothing spectacularly new
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Some of the levels will keep you honest
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★★	Enough variety in its cuteness to keep going for a while

■ **OVERALL**
Much better than the original and keeping up with the Joneses

83

PERCENT

HEART OF DARKNESS

Heat of Darkness was, for its time, a highly anticipated title, especially amongst the older gamers who know who Eric Chahi is. For those of you who don't know, Eric Chahi was the creative genius behind Another World, which was considered to be quite a revolutionary game for its time.

The formula was simple: gorgeous animations, imaginative storylines, and gameplay that truly tests one's understanding of the environment they see before them. *Heart of Darkness* lived up to that expectation, but the title's initial release was upstaged by an upstart little runt going by the name of Abe from the planet Oddworld.

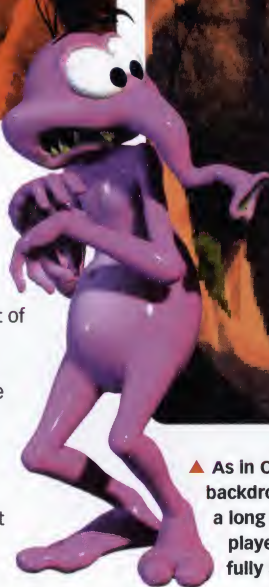
Now that the dust has settled, *HOD* is still a great game, chronicling the adventures of a wee lad who goes looking for his kidnapped dog in his flying machine, and ends up on a strange land in the process. The challenge placed before you is to rescue your dog and escape from this ghoulish-infested land.

As far as gameplay goes, *Heart of Darkness* has everything Abe had, and is probably slightly better for being more action oriented and easier to understand



than alien environments in Abe. People probably also feel more at home with *Heart of Darkness* because of the atmosphere and character of the game, which is greatly reminiscent of Disney and other such mainstream tastes.

In the end, it should be remembered that *Heart of Darkness* is an old-school traditional game. The 2D action can be ingeniously frantic at times, but it's best recommended to those who enjoyed the Abe series.



▲ As in *Oddworld*, the sharp 2D backdrops in *Heart of Darkness* go a long way in convincing the player that they are enjoying a fully 3D game

PUBLISHER: Infogrames
DEVELOPER: Ocean
GENRE: 2D Adventure
PRICE: TBA

86
PERCENT

COOL BOARDERS 2

When you think snowboarding, you think *Coolboarders*. That's as simple as it gets, because *Coolboarders* is the game that gave snowboarding its mainstream acceptance. When *Coolboarders 2* was released, people eagerly anticipated a spectacular sequel, and that's what they got.

Now that *Coolboarders 2* has gained platinum status, those of you who missed out on the game now have the opportunity to pick up the game at a more affordable price. Many of you will be thinking that *Coolboarders 3* would be a worthier purchase, but this is one of those rare instances in which the sequel is not as good as its predecessor.



▲ Hailed by many as the best in the *Cool Boarders* series, *CB2* was produced by the original developing team that did *CB1*. The gameplay will be familiar to *CB* veterans

You see, whilst *Coolboarders 3* has smoother motion and cleaner graphics, the action was nowhere near as fast nor as varied. Compared to other *Coolboarders* games, *Coolboarders 2* features faster action, narrower runs, and an almost infinite potential for tricks. However, this nicely executed form of action came at a heavy price: visuals.

The framerates were okay, but the texture detail could have been written off as very first generation. The game was also plagued with seaming and break-up, which by today's standards look very awkward on an environment that's meant to appear like snow.

Coolboarders is not a game that has aged well with time. It is in the nature of a pioneering game like *Coolboarders* for its now obvious design faults to stand out sharply against the improvements that have been subsequently. Recommended only for fans of the genre.

PUBLISHER: Sony
DEVELOPER: UEP Systems
GENRE: Snowboard
PRICE: TBA

79
PERCENT

Casting CALL

Tekken 3 is a great game, but it could be a greater movie. The path from PlayStation to multiplex is a rocky road, however. These days, you need more than \$100 million and a pumping techno soundtrack. For a good film, you need good casting.

Let's face it: videogames are big business. The very notion that the money to be made in interactive entertainment is comparable to the Hollywood filmmaking machine is no longer a fanciful joke: it's fact.

We now live in a world that demands spin-offs and merchandising of every kind, and the lines that divide different entertainment mediums have become blurred. Movies have begot games. Games have begot movies. This process, more often than not, produces horrible mutant hybrids, stillborn, or worse, granted a week or two of life at the box office, where they suffer terribly before crawling back to the weekly section of the video store to die.

But it doesn't have to be that way. With careful direction and the right casting, any video game could become a timeless cinematic masterpiece. With all due respect and genuine reverence, we now take a look at Tekken 3, and give our reasoned opinions as to who would make up an ideal cast. Powder-snorting Hollywood players take note.



Nina Williams

SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR



ABOUT NINA:

This beautiful assassin still looks 22 thanks to a 20 year long cryogenic suspension process. Both her looks and her voracity in battle were perfectly preserved, as was her hatred for her sister Anna.

SARA'S OTHER ROLES:

Cruel Intentions, Buffy the Vampire Slayer

QUALIFICATIONS:

Sarah's proven that she's got what it takes to kick serious ass, and look good at it at the same time.

King

BILL GOLDBERG



ABOUT KING:

A Mexican wrestler who likes to dress up as wild animals, King works tirelessly to support homeless kids in his poverty stricken homeland. An orphan himself, he knows the hardship of life in the gutter. His inspiration to dedicate his life to charitable work was the former King of the first two Tekkens, who adopted and raised him.

GOLDBERG'S QUALIFICATIONS:

Since King just wears a mask and growls a lot, you would only really need to be a big boofhead who likes tracksuit pants and can wrestle.

Lei Wulong

JACKIE CHAN



ABOUT LEI:

A Kung Fu master, Lei has been on the Hong Kong Special Police Force for some decades. Known by his colleagues as the 'super cop' and feared by all the criminals in the city, he has a personal vendetta with a young smuggler known as Hwoarang.

JACKIE'S OTHER STARRING ROLES:

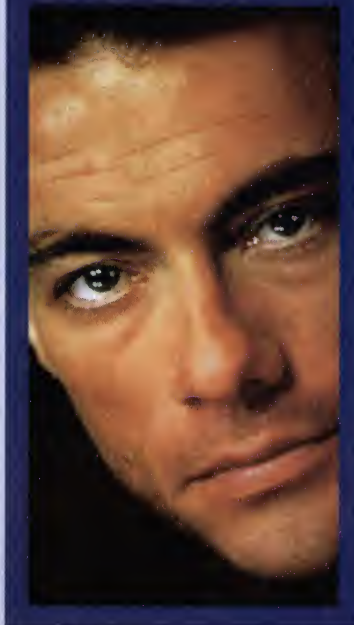
Rush Hour, First Strike, Fearless Hyena

QUALIFICATIONS:

Jackie Chan is a master of Wing Chun Kung Fu, choreography and slapstick humour. All three would be essential to carry the Tekken legend from phosphor to celluloid.

Paul Phoenix

JEAN-CLAUDE VAN DAMME



ABOUT PAUL:

He makes a rough living out of his streetfighting skills and likes to speed on his motorbike. Because of a traffic jam Paul was late for the second King of Iron Fist tournament and hence denied entry.

JEAN-CLAUDE'S CLAIM TO FAME:

Street Fighter, Double Impact

QUALIFICATIONS:

Adept in kickboxing in his own right, Van Damme would lend a continental flavour to the primarily pacific rim context of the Tekken universe. He also looks and sounds ridiculous, like Paul.

Hwoarang

JET LI



ABOUT HWOARANG:

Raised by the fearful Baek Doo-San, this 19 year old street gang leader is a master of the ancient Korean martial art of Tykwon Do. He lives on the wrong side of the law and revels in his motorbike, a bit like Paul. He is also into yachting.

MR. LI'S OTHER ROLES:

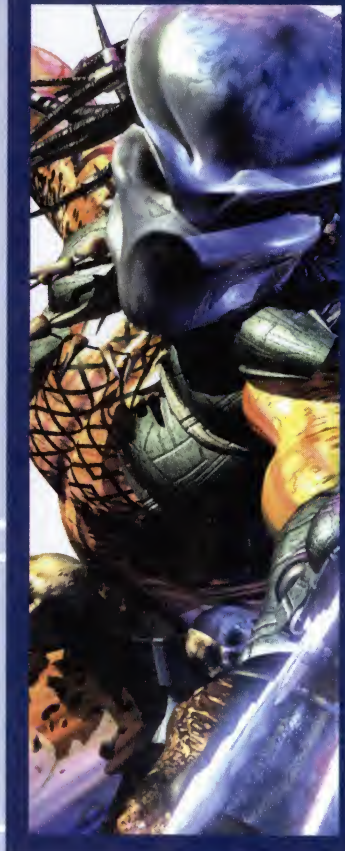
Lethal Weapon 4, Once Upon a Time in China, Iron Rooster VS the Centipede

QUALIFICATIONS:

The Chinese National Champion of martial arts. Big kicks, big jumps, and very cool costumes.

Yoshimitsu

PREDATOR



ABOUT YOSHIMITSU:

A cyborg samurai space ninja with a glowing sword and unusual powers over time and space.

WHERE'S THE PREDATOR?

Predator, Predator 2

QUALIFICATIONS:

The Predators are a race of very highly advanced reptilian humanoids who use their ultra advanced technology to facilitate their preferred lifestyle: hunting other intelligent life for sport. They can become invisible and look a bit like Yoshimitsu, so a lethargic American public shouldn't be able to tell the difference.

Forrest Law

BRUCE LEE



ABOUT FORREST:

The son of Marshal Law, Forrest looks set to inherit his father's martial arts dojo. Problem is, daddy thinks Forrest is a bit wild, that he doesn't know constraint.

MR. LEE'S CLAIM TO FAME:

Enter/ Way of the Dragon, Fist of Fury

QUALIFICATIONS:

Since Forrest Law is a shameless rip off of Bruce, the casting would be flawless. Minor details such as having been deceased for 26 years could be overcome by use of a computer generated body double. It worked for his son, right?

Eddy Gordo

MASTER P (PERCY MILLER)



ABOUT THE GORD:

His father, a wealthy Brazilian civilian, was murdered by a mega drug lord after refusing to deal with criminals. Eddy returned home to find his father dying. He was told to accept the blame for the shooting, because the only place Eddy would be safe was in jail. Imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit, he learned the secrets of his martial skills on the inside.

MASTER P'S APPEARANCES:

Foolish, Hot Boyz, Takedown

QUALIFICATIONS:

This gangsta rap supa star has all the style and overconfidence befitting the cocky capauera king that is Eddy.

Jin Kazama

BRANDON LEE



ALL ABOUT JIN:

Does he really have the seed of the Devil in him?

BRANDON'S STARRING ROLES:

The Crow, Rapid Fire, Laser Mission

QUALIFICATIONS:

Jin Kazama is not a real person. He is entirely computer generated. As they only managed to finish The Crow by wrapping a cg skin of Brandon around a body double, it would be fitting that he play the likewise non-existent Jin. Of course, the film would have to be rated M - Medium level Irony.

Ling Xiaoyu

NAMIE AMURO (J-POP DIVA)



LING'S STORY:

This teenage dynamo is into sugar and spice and panda husbandry. Heihachi promised to build her a theme park in her image should she win.

NAMIE'S ALBUMS INCLUDE:

Sweet 19 Blues, Concentration 20, Can you celebrate?

QUALIFICATIONS:

Ms Amuro would bring her youthful spunkiness, astounding good looks and angelic voice to the role. She'd also look good in a school uniform. Really good.

Bryan Fury

MARK ROLSTON (ALIENS)



BRYAN FURY'S INFO:

A deceased police officer, Bryan has been resurrected and granted super powers by a rival of Dr Boskonovich. Wears skin tight crocodile-skin pants and also collects lighters.

MARK WHO?

Daylight, Eraser, Scanner Cop

QUALIFICATIONS:

Colonial marine, Frankenstein's monster, same difference. Plus Mark happens to look exactly like Bryan Fury, so he was a shoe-in for the role.

Anna Williams

REESE WITHERSPOON



ABOUT ANNA:

The somewhat more bubbly sister of Nina, Anna can do somersault kicks!

REESE'S OTHER ROLES:

Election, Cruel Intentions, American Psycho

QUALIFICATIONS:

Whoever plays Anna has to look good in one of those Chinese frocks. You know the ones, with the really high cut bit up the side, providing a tempting glance of their legs, such that a gust of wind in your minds eye could reveal - you know the ones I mean.

Mokujin

LEONARDO DICAPRIO



THE WOOD?

A hen pecked wooden man who lives in the forest is one of the butt-ends of many jokes in Tekken 3. Still, if you know how to use him/her right, you'll gain the respect of many a player of the game.

LEO'S OTHER ROLES:

Titanic, Romeo & Juliet, that one with the gay poets.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Leo's wooden acting would be more than appropriate for a contemporary interpretation of the lovable automaton.

Gun Jack

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGAR



ABOUT GUN JACK:

This Russian robot was designed to be the future of war. But his friendship with a little girl gave light to his human soul.

SOME OF BIG ARNIE'S ROLES:

True Lies, The Terminator, Commando, Hercules In New York.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Arnie is a machine - a killing machine. Gun Jack is a machine - a killing machine. This Austrian born Kennedy wannabe would be ideal for playing a robotic supersoldier of the future. And the beauty of it is that he wouldn't have to talk. Perfect!

Julia Chang

JENNIFER LOPEZ



ABOUT JULIA:

The daughter of Michelle, Julia has a free spirit and a down to earth fighting style. She and her mother represent the hippy segment of the planet's population, working against Heihachi's corporate monopolisation of the earth.

JENNY'S OTHER ROLES:

Anaconda, Selena, Money Train

QUALIFICATIONS:

A relatively minor character in the Tekken saga, Julia would most likely be reduced to a punkrat in a tight outfit who ends up in mud-drenched cat fights. So it doesn't really matter who plays her, provided she looks like a punkrat.

Dr. Boskonovitch

DESMOND LLEWELYN



ABOUT DR BOSKONOVITCH:

The ancient professor responsible for the invention of Yoshimitsu the space ninja is now a playable fighter in the third King of Iron Fist tournament.

STARRED IN:

Every single James Bond film imaginable.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Mr Llewelyn has had a long and glorious career playing the brains behind the wonderful gadgetry of James Bond. The man who created the submersible would have no trouble playing a twisted old geezer who keeps falling over.

Heihachi Mishima

PATRICK STEWART



MEET MR. MISHIMA:

Owner of Mishima Conglomeration and self-proclaimed world leader and a grandfather. His son Kazuya, who had baby Jin with babe Jun 19 years previously, was killed in the last Tekken tournament. Then a mysterious ogre murdered Jun as well. Heihachi took Jin under his wing, but now he has a score to settle with the ogre.

THE CAPTAIN'S LOG:

StarTrek: First Contact, Death Train, Dune

QUALIFICATIONS:

A Shakespearian actor by trade, Stewart has lent dignity to Hollywood abominations. His upper class accent is perfect for playing the head of a global financial empire.

True Ogre

RAY PARK - DARTH MAUL



ABOUT TRUE OGRE:

This ancient Aztec god of violence has green skin and can breathe fire and fly with no visible means of support.

PARKY BOY'S OTHER STARRING ROLE:

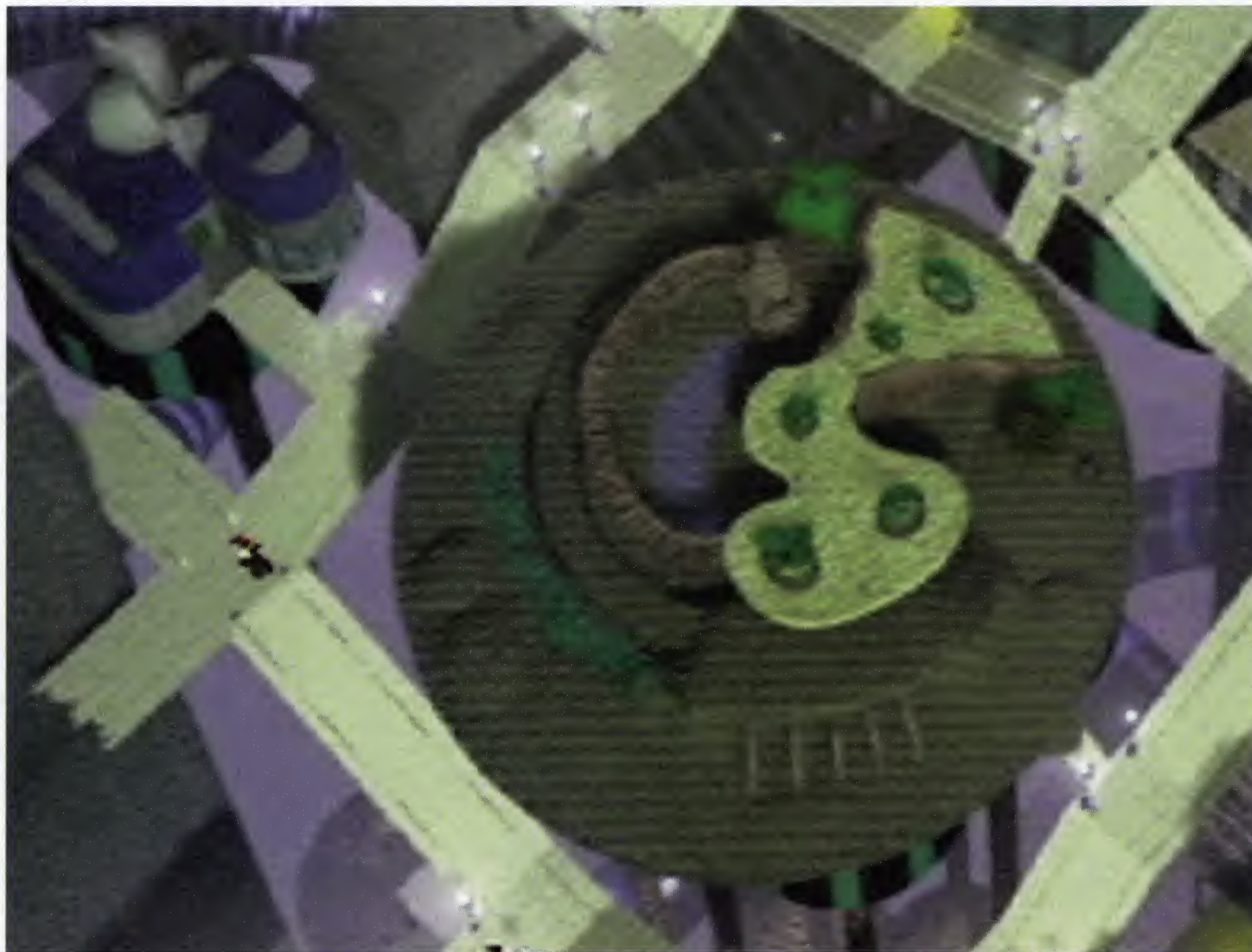
Star Wars Episode I - The Phantom Menace, Mortal Kombat: Annihilation

QUALIFICATIONS:

Whether playing a dark lord of the Sith or a body double for Rayden, this Scottish martial arts expert has the unmitigated savagery that playing Ogre would demand down pat.

Shadow Madness

A new RPG, this time from an American developer. How does it hold up against the stalwarts?



We've played a few RPGs on the PlayStation over the years, and even though they were excellent, there was just something missing.

Final Fantasy 7 from Square, Blaze & Blade from Funsoft, Granstream Saga from THQ and others filled the role playing void in my heart, but there was something about them that didn't sit right.

Graphically, they were (and still are) impressive, but the awkward English translation (along with a grammatical nightmare) of what was Japanese text coupled with the disproportionate animation of the character's mouths as

they supposedly said their lines was part of the problem. The Japanese humour was yet another problem.

STOP THIS MADNESS!

Now, along comes *Shadow Madness* - a game developed by an American company, Crave. This game is looking good, even at this stage in development, and has definitely satisfied our longing for an RPG that has humour that Western audiences can understand and enjoy, along with a storyline much more in line with Western thought.

The first thing I must say about *Shadow Madness* is that it is so much like Final Fantasy 7, it almost hurts. The epic storyline, the traditional 3 character party, the finely detailed backgrounds and frequent cutscenes, the text boxed speech and the glorious musical score in the background all serve to point this game at the same crowd who follow Square's epic RPG titles.

However, looking past these similarities, you find yourself looking at a game that has enough small enhancements that would recommend buying this game alone. However, the

native English text, the exaggerated American humour and a more adult and dark tale binds the whole thing together.

SCHIZOPHRENIC STORYLINE

You control Stinger, a young man who had a fight with his stepfather and decided to sleep out in the countryside to think things through. Deciding that it was finally time to leave home, you head back to your village, Port Lochane, to get a few things.

You arrive at the outskirts in time to see a huge energy ball come down from the sky and basically blow the crap

out of the entire village. You are thrown a few hundred metres away from the explosion and knocked unconscious.

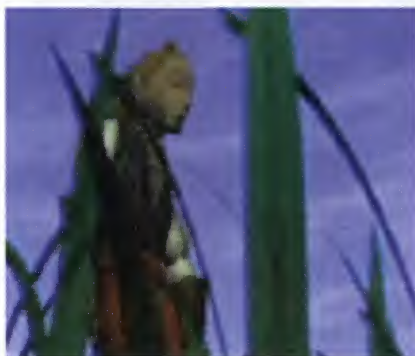
Coming to, you race back into what remains of your village only to be confronted with ruins and half-crazed people. In fact, the people you come into contact with are more than half-crazed, as they are struck with what's called *Shadow Madness*.

In the centre of town, you find a huge pit in the ground with an enormous roiling mass of almost-animal, almost-human body parts, all crying out with hunger and pain. This is where you realise something majorly sinister is happening.

As you head out of the village you meet up with a young woman who introduces herself as Windleaf of Enclaan. Enclaan is a village north of yours and she tells a story of woe that is similar to what has happened to yours. As you travel in that direction to see if you can do anything, you meet up with a biomechanical robot that calls itself Harv-5.

with the Melee attacks, you can attack in three different variations - defensive, normal and aggressive.

Choosing different kinds of attacking styles will result in different amounts of damage and varying chances to hit your opponents. The style of attack will also affect your opponent's chance of hitting you - with an aggressive attack leaving you a lot more open to their attempt.



▲ With an original storyline, charismatic characters and detailed environments throughout, *Shadow Madness* looks like a stiff challenge for *Final Fantasy VIII*

BRILLIANT COMBAT

The enemies are not scared about coming forward either. You start your control of the game by being in a fight with a monster that resembles a demon-cow, and things go down from there. Zombies are the least of it, and in later stages, where you meet demonspawn and the like, you'll be facing spell-casters, and various others.

Combat is nicely presented and navigating is straightforward. When you meet up with some bad dudes that need a bit of killing, your view changes in a way that is again similar to other RPGs like *FF7*. You then have the option to attempt to flee, or to engage the enemy.

Once you have engaged, you select from the four main options by hitting the L1/L2/R1/R2 shoulder buttons - you get to choose from melee, missile, magic and using items. And it doesn't stop there. For example,

'THE WAY CRAVE HAVE DESIGNED THE INTERFACE REALLY IMPRESSED US'

The way Crave have designed the interface really impressed us, because although there is a lot of detail there, it is exposed in a way that is clear and very easy to understand. There is even a way to do double damage, by tapping the action button at just the right time.

CG SPELLS

Spell-casting is in the same vein as other RPGs with very beautiful graphics and sound effects accompanying each spell. It is easy to see what spell is being cast simply by the graphics that are produced.

Crave have done something that looks extremely nice. Certain spells, most notably the summoning ones like Hawk, don't use every day graphics we are used to seeing. Instead, a well integrated CG cutscene is implemented, with the results of the spell being shown.

This CG is so well designed that I at first mistook the opening frames as part of the normal spell casting - the transition was THAT smooth. And it comes back to the normal combat in a similar way, with the summoned beast swooping down and attacking the enemy in the normal combat mode.

Another simple, effective feature is the way that the developers have implemented random encounters. When a random encounter is about to occur, you'll hear some sort of warning sound.

Hitting the L2/R2 buttons will cause your party to try to hide from the encounter and is mostly successful. Sometimes the monsters will sniff you out and you'll have to fight them anyway, but this just adds a little more realism to the way these encounters work.

So, combine a dark storyline about a world succumbing to the insane urges of this *Shadow Madness* with characters more in line with what our Western minds think like, and beautiful graphics and animation, and you're faced with a game that is likely to be a sure fire winner.

It is slightly more adult oriented than *FF7*, with the evil demons and the like being suitably disgusting, and some of the jokes are possibly a bit mature for some, but I really enjoyed looking at what this game looks like now.

I, for one, am eager to see this title finished and on the shelves. We will provide news on the release of *Shadow Madness* down under, as soon as we hear.

Andrew Parsons



▲ The battles are innovative, with the opportunity to inflict twice the damage every time you attack, depending on your timing skills



POSITIVE POINTS

- Graphics are nice and the CG cutscenes are well integrated
- Enough new features to put this on any RPG fan's wish list

NEGATIVE POINTS

- Some of the jokes are a little stereotypically sexist
- Some scenes are a little dark and can be hard to make out

Bomberman Fantasy Race

The legendary bombing freak rides high in his own racing title

Bomberman has been the king of multiplayer console gaming since his inception in the age of the 16-bit machines. The combination of frantic action and unfettered bastardry has drawn in many, and the game has inspired innumerable ports, knock-offs and now a spin-off.

After the lukewarm reception of Bomberman 64, it's been proven that the myths of these little guys who run around and bomb each other is not immune to mediocrity.

This latest effort takes a break from the familiar maze dashing insanity of every previous Bomberman game, trading it in for racing insanity.

Presumably hoping to cash in on the success of the Mario Kart titles, *Bomberman Fantasy Race* takes the familiar characters of Bomberman, and places them in a Wacky Races scenario.

Derivative? Maybe. The hook is that the characters do not drive cars, but instead oversized cuddly animals. Like the go-kart model, this allows the vehicle to take up minimum space on screen, both increasing the space available to parade the recognisable,



▲ Even though it's a racing game, no Bomberman game would be complete without at least the ability to toss bombs at each other

These chiefly concern large, cartoon-show looking black bombs. Some you drop behind you, others you toss ahead, still others are propelled by an unseen rocket-like effect so they zoom up the track, homing in on the racer next in line. Other speed and time bonuses round out the selection. The time warp one actually freezes the other

racers in their tracks, allowing you to dash past them unfettered.

The focus of play is on control of your beast. He does not behave like a car, and has his own level of endurance. This "energy bar" can be reduced by falling foul of traps and weapons of other racers, and also through your own heartlessness.

You have it in your power to kick in the spurs, and force your animal to belt down the track like its life depended on it. When speeding, your mount hunches over, and your jockey holds on for dear life, his feet trailing in the breeze.

When in play, the actors all look like colourful balls and melons, held in place by invisible forces. The circuits are both rich in colour and frivolity. When you unlock later stages, you can race toboggan-like down snow capped mountains on your beast, or even gallop around in a maze-like environment more befitting the characters.

Bomberman Fantasy Race will not set the world on fire with its realism and speed, but this is not its plan. All aspects of the game remain within your field of view, where comical effect can be delivered with the most punch. Cartoon violence is brought to the fore, and race positions move rapidly back and forth as comic vengeance is wrought.

While all of this simplicity would be welcome to the under-tens it's aimed at, the zaniness of the action should appeal to all ages. Bomberman is a party game, and always will be.

By far the best value will be had from this title in the 2 player mode. It could make many little children very happy. If you're a little child, or enjoy staring at a dinosaur's arse for minutes on end, maybe you should be happy too.

James Cottee

bankable characters, and promoting the comical, light-hearted nature of the sport. The settings and animals match the early-childhood simplicity of the almost faceless characters. Everything is bright, friendly, and smiles at you with a pastel pajama kind of unconditional love.

THE GAMEPLAY

But how does the game play? There are only six racers, of which only five can be on track at once. This is not really a hardcore racing sim by any means. As you race the track, an endless supply of comical powerups is presented before you.

POSITIVE POINTS

- Cute as a button. Great for freaky little kids
- Unique angle on racing - running!

NEGATIVE POINTS

- Too simple. Too Easy
- Erratic gameplay will frustrate any serious racers



Fatal Fury Wild Ambition

An SNK fighting classic goes 3D

Fatal Fury Wild Ambition represents SNK's second foray into the genre of 3D fighting after the hugely disappointing Samurai Spirits IV, and so far it's looking to be a very solid title with plenty of potential.

SNK have followed the way of Capcom by producing a game with a fully capable 3D fighting engine that still plays mostly like its original 2D predecessor.



▲ Considering it first appeared on the Hyper Neo Geo 64, this isn't a bad conversion



▲ Classic moves from the 2D original look more effective in this polygonal form



Wild Ambition features all the most popular modes of a fighting game: Arcade mode, Vs mode and Training. Most of the popular characters from Fatal Fury have been carried over into the 3D arena.

Along with the old favourites like Terry, Andy, Mai, and the incomparable Geese Howard, a few new characters have been added to the game. There are 10 selectable characters at the start with 2 secret characters that are available once you've beaten the game.

The 3D game engine for *Wild Ambition*, although unfinished at this point, is looking very good. The character models are large and detailed enough to see individual fingers. The character movements are also very natural and animated very smoothly.

With some more development, SNK could have a real winner of a 3D engine for its upcoming titles. The environments for each stage are constructed in the full three dimensions.

SNK opted to use 2D backdrops that scroll laterally to give the effect of a 3D world. There are some stages where the backdrop doesn't wrap around smoothly but this should be addressed before release.

Other notable visual changes include the artwork for *Wild Ambition*, differing from other SNK games. The opening FMV is also extremely good, rendering in realistic 3D with a dark and foreboding air to it. The ending sequences have also been animated using the new 3D character models.

Wild Ambition features a simpler control system than Fatal Fury 2 or 3,

using only single strength kicks and punches as well as a special button and a 'shift' or dodge button.

Combos are executed by pressing kick or punch repeatedly or in conjunction with special. The shift button makes your character roll. Using up or down you can change the direction of the roll from left to right.

Special moves are performed the same as in previous Fatal Furies, a sequence of directions on the dpad followed by a kick or a punch. SNK have also adopted a double life bar similar Samurai Showdown 4.

Another new feature is a super/stun meter at the bottom of the screen. The meter builds when you make successful hits on your opponent, however because it is also the stun meter, when you take hits it goes down. Take enough consecutive hits, the meter bottoms out and your character will be dazed for the next few seconds.

Sound and music are still unfinished at this point but are sounding appropriately Fatal Fury and SNK with some meaty effects and rocking tracks.

The final edition for Fatal Fury *Wild Ambition* is certainly something to look out for, especially for SNK and fighting game fans. We will have a review on the cards just as soon as we can get our hands on it.

Aaron Lai

POSITIVE POINTS

- Great visuals and animation.
- Gameplay that's faithful to the 2D original

NEGATIVE POINTS

- Total package a little unrefined at this point

High Heat Baseball 2000

Find out if High Heat Baseball is a hot game, or hot in name alone

Baseball is starting to enjoy the kind of showing on the PSX that other sports sims such as basketball and soccer have enjoyed for years. And while developers are doing such a good job of it, then why not?

With Triple Play 2000 being the ring leader at this stage in the year, *High Heat Baseball 2000* has arrived hoping to be just as sizzling a game.

But the competition is hefty and the shoes to be filled are large, so let's fatten our arses, shove a kilo of gum in our mouths, and approach the plate.

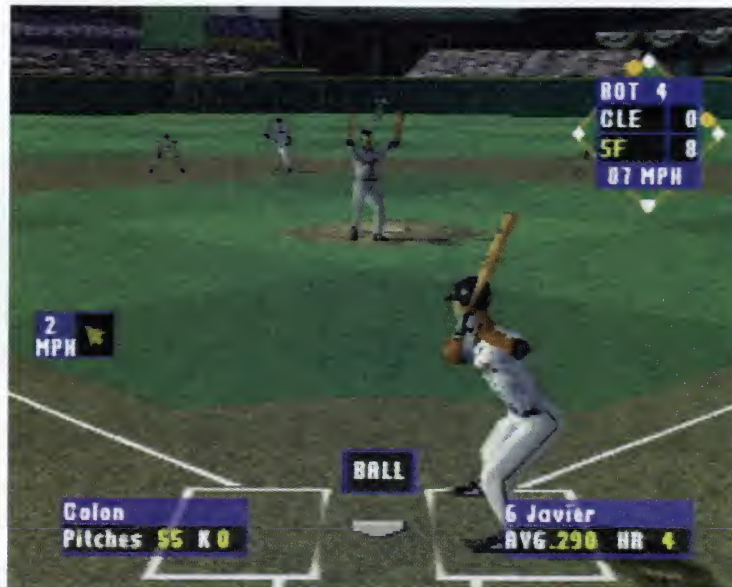
The first impression you get from *High Heat Baseball* is that the potential is there. The interfaces are sharp with

HOW'S THE FIELDING?

The fielding also proves to be a drawn-out process. The fielders all seem to be suffering from late night stints at Burger King, as their speed in the field can be regulated by the speed at which the grass grows.

As the batter reaches the plate, you think to yourself that it doesn't look too bad. It's only when you start to glance around at the rest of the visuals that you begin to frown.

As mentioned before, the batter (and even the pitcher at a distance) seems graphically impressive. The batter takes up a large proportion of the screen sporting detailed uniform and equipment,



'OTHER ASSORTED MOVEMENTS STRIKE YOU AS BEING VERY UNCOORDINATED'

options a plenty. Being quite similar to Triple Play, *High Heat Baseball* offers Exhibition, Family Mode (where everything aside from batting is controlled by the computer), Quickplay, Season, Playoffs and Home Run Derby.

High Heat doesn't disappoint in the statistical department. The rosters are updated as of March '99, and with team standings, league ladders and the obligatory licencing from MLB, the bare bones have definitely been put in place.

It's all very well having sufficient setup options to promote a game, but if the gameplay sucks then it proves to be a waste of time. Unlike the user-friendly interfaces and corresponding control method in Triple Play, *High Heat* takes some serious getting used to.

Pitching is controlled by the D-pad, rather than having specific shape buttons correspond with different variations such as fast, curve, slider balls etc. The pitcher you choose determines the variety of pitching at your disposal.

Each pitcher can throw a standard fast ball and curve ball, but other pitches such as changeups are determined by the individual. Although it is frustrating, as all you're after is a universal man who could pitch the sun if he so wished, it does add a certain depth to the game.

Batting is even more complex. Not only do you have to time the swing of your bat, but you have to aim the swing (using the D-pad) in order to connect. This problem is exacerbated by the batter's swing animation, which isn't very fluid and difficult to judge.

as well as a high polygon count that keeps the blockiness to a minimum.

Both the pitcher and batter come with individual reactions in regards to the state of play, which goes a long way in creating a sense of realism within the game. Only when things start to move, that the credibility rating starts to plummet.

Animation can be likened to Thomas the Tank Engine, in that it chugs along at a very crappy rate. Moreover,

most of it just doesn't look right, the throwing, running between bases, and other assorted movements strike you as being very uncoordinated.

High Heat Baseball 2000 isn't shaping up to be the baseball icon for the next millennium. Although it is a competent effort with some noticeable good points, you will be hard struck overlooking Triple Play as this year's primary choice.

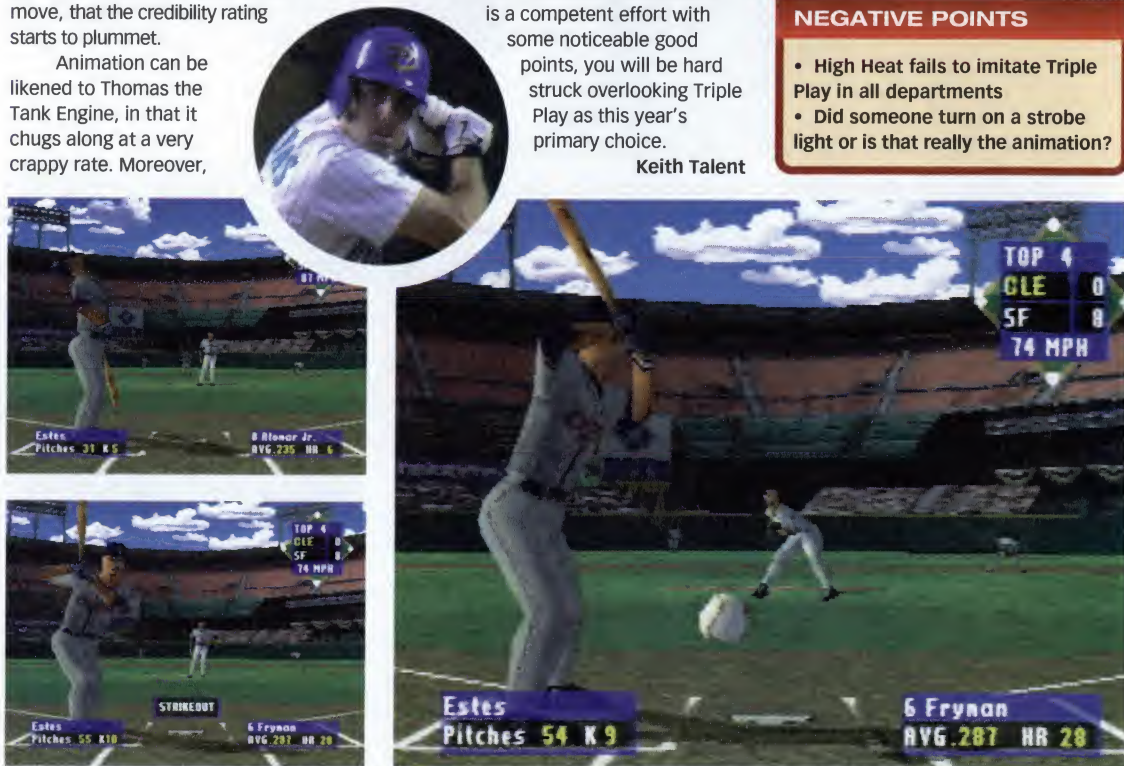
Keith Talent

POSITIVE POINTS

- Professional presentation and a complete assortment of options
- Imitates Triple Play in some areas

NEGATIVE POINTS

- High Heat fails to imitate Triple Play in all departments
- Did someone turn on a strobe light or is that really the animation?



▲ The pitcher and batter are constructed well, but from these screenshots you can see how rough the rest of the screen is

Alexi Lalas International Soccer

Industry newcomer Take 2 gives International Soccer a spin

What better way to market a sports game that put an international star's name in the title? But wait a minute, who's *Alexi Lalas*? Lacking the international fame of Ronaldo or Maradona, *Alexi Lalas* is a famous footballer - at least in the United States.

So Take 2 and Z-Axis' marketing play will be lost on all but the most avid soccer fans. Without an ostentatious superstar to cloud our judgement we can look into what *Alexi Lalas International Soccer* has to offer.

Alexi Lalas was intended to be a new kind of soccer game, but there's nothing new, let alone revolutionary about this game. In fact, many of the luxurious options of the current benchmark, FIFA '99, have been omitted.

DECENT BALL CONTROL

Ball control is fairly decent and there's a good variety of kicks to keep the player happy. Pass-through kicks are available both on the ground and through the air in the form of a chip. However, there's something missing.



'THERE'S NOTHING NEW, LET ALONE REVOLUTIONARY ABOUT THIS GAME'

WHAT'S MISSING?

There are fewer options, features, modes of play and moves in *Lalas*. The game has only two modes of play - the most popular - Friendly and Tournament modes, so at least the basics are covered.

Alexi Lalas International Soccer also focuses on Team Management. A team's strategies and tactics can be managed, playing formations customised, and tactics switched on the fly. In the final release there will be 70 international teams (and ten secret teams) included in the game.

There's nothing overwhelming about Z-Axis's attempt and unfortunately there's nothing new added. Thankfully management is intuitive and simple so that you're not red carded by the interface before the game even starts.

Once underway the game controls are above average in responsiveness, and the pace of the game has been increased - great news for hyperactive gamers out there. While this does make *Lalas* more energetic, it takes away from the realism (something a soccer game should be striving for in my opinion).



▲ At least the close-up camera angles make up somewhat for the dodgy textures

There is no explicit approach to dribbling. The player can run with the ball but there's no way to fake the opposition or side step. This is such an important aspect of soccer that it's a little troubling that *Lalas* omits it completely.

Artificial intelligence in the game is decent most of the time. You can't simply run and score off the whistle and an opposition player will intercept a ground pass if close enough. However I remember the intense frustration as a computer player ran up the sideline

while my defender simply stood there, not even moving around ineffectually.

The only way to rectify this was to manually take control of the defence. There are three difficulty levels - Youth, Professional and World Class but while providing increased playability, none of these levels rectifies the faults of the AI.

Ball physics are good, the ball arches after a kick and spins after a slight deflection off the goalie. The ball spins against the net and bounces before resting on the ground - like a real ball.

▲ Heck, we can't even make out the name on the back of the jersey

The graphics of *Alexi Lalas* are bright and crisp but do not reflect that of a next generation game. The players look deformed in the hands and feet. The high resolution of the game seems to magnify the grotesqueness of the player models. Yet the frame rate stays above average level, even under higher resolution.

The motion-captured animation of the game is realistic and smooth, especially that of the goalies. Their leaps and saves look natural and lifelike. Unfortunately the goalies will perform dramatic saves even when the ball is rolling slowly towards them.

Lalas will enter a tough segment of the games market, crowded by the offerings of FIFA '99 and International Superstar Soccer. While the game appears to be final, it is plausible improvements could be made before release. Look out for the review soon.

Sebastian Fern

POSITIVE POINTS

- Excellent ball movement
- Great camera work

NEGATIVE POINTS

- First-generation textures
- Low polygon counts

Mission Impossible

Can the PlayStation do as good a job as the Nintendo 64?

When everyone was all hyped up about Tom Cruise's cult action flick, *Mission: Impossible*, there was an equivalent amount of hype surrounding the corresponding Nintendo 64 game.

The only difference was that instead of there being a large crowd of film buffs, there was an uncontrollable horde of marauding kiddies. As most gamers will know, videogames based on movies are generally not that good, and the N64 version of *Mission: Impossible* was no exception.

With the benefit of 20/20 hindsight and the really obvious opportunity to correct past mistakes, *Mission: Impossible* is making its way to the PlayStation.

REPLICATED GAMEPLAY

The game takes a third person, top-down perspective, with you adopting the role of Tom Cruise's character in the film, Ethan Hunt. Initially compared to a Goldeneye method of play, *Mission: Impossible* contains more variants on the standard shoot 'em up action game.

The game contains a vast array of objectives that are spread across five intricate missions and covering twenty levels. There definitely is a lot more skill in regards to espionage and patience required in *Mission: Impossible*, with missions such as assuming a guard's identity using an identikit in order to access restricted areas, being just one example.

The array of items and weapons at your disposal is truly magnificent with the likes of the Uzi, 9mm, 7.65mm hand gun with silencer, hand grenades, sniper rifle, field scanner, night view glasses, nausea powder, smoke generator, face maker, dart gun, sleeper darts, blow pipe and gas injectors.

Mission objectives have all been taken from the film, which proved to be a great addition in Goldeneye. As a result, re-enacting scenes such as dangling by a rope to access the world's most secure computer terminal, or spiking drinks of party guests in order to assume their identity, is great fun.

Unfortunately, these kinds of levels are few, requiring a lot of drudgery before being reached. This may lead to many of the not so dedicated gamers quitting the game early, lacking the patience required to make it through the first levels so that some enjoyment can be derived from the game.



'IT IS BY NO MEANS THE CATARACT INDUCING SPECTACLE THAT WE FEARED'



This preview version was shabby in the visuals department. The N64 has more power in the hardware department, so it was surprising that *Mission: Impossible* was only a bit grainy in the textures, with the frame rate dropping off at times.

It is by no means the cataract inducing spectacle that we feared. The music has been ported from the film, bringing with it the catchy, suspense inducing tunes that establish the sound department as being the most accomplished aspect to the game.

Mission: Impossible has implemented a novel style of play, requiring brain strain to conquer the missions. With an array of weapons and other assorted paraphernalia, *Mission: Impossible* has all the ingredients for a great game.

Keith Talent

▲ This is a surprisingly good conversion of the N64 game, without the over-filtering or annoying fog

POSITIVE POINTS

- Novel style of play with plenty of gadgets to enjoy
- Some interesting and absorbing mission objectives

NEGATIVE POINTS

- The interesting levels can be counted on one hand
- Graphics really aren't up to scratch

Forty Winks

Wake with a start in this potential Mario 64 killer

Hand off snakey. The world is going to get another 3D platformer where you run around collecting a number of identical items from a fantasy kingdom of varied landscapes and deceptively linear freedom of movement.

There have been brilliant offerings so far along those lines, what with Mario, and Crash, and even Sonic's latest 3D quest. It's a genre that has produced some of the best games ever, and *Forty Winks* could just be the next one in line.

A ROUGH AND TUMBLE ADVENTURE

Forty Winks lets you play as one of two small children, named Ruff and Tumble, who both resemble Wee-Willy-Winky. Play involves running upstairs and downstairs in your nightgown, and of course a quest to free a race of magical creatures called "Winks".

These guys ensure that kids have pleasant dreams, of sugarplums and flying and stuff. But the evil insomniac NiteKap is abducting Winks and turning them evil. These "Hood-Winks" now torment children everywhere with nightmares of turning up to school naked, that sort of thing. Only forty of the Winks are free, and it's your job to save them.

While only at the alpha stage, the game is already visually stunning. The worlds that the little nightshirt-wearing dudes inhabit are made up of innumerable polygons that create large, friendly arcs and rolling landscapes.

You start off in your bedroom, an intricate chamber down to the dowels in the woodwork and the stickers on your Rubick's cube. Your house then serves as a launchpad to hubs and boundless adventures across the dreamscape.

The stylised rendering of characters and the increasingly surreal surroundings make *Forty Winks* feel like a cartoon and a dream. The game levels are intended to represent all the different scenarios of childish fantasy, including pirate ships, jungles and castles.

LET YOUR DREAMS BECOME REALITY

One of the more innovative features is the ability to wear different costumes in different parts of the game. These represent your dream persona in the fantasy lands, and each has different powers and abilities. The ninja outfit lends you deadly swords, and the futuristic costume lets you soar on rocket boots.

The version we had to preview had little in the way of plot, interaction or gameplay, but it has a gob-smacking environment to roam around in.

The effort put into bringing to life a colourful storybook world was more than apparent, as every subtle detail of the terrain was both functional to the plot and arranged with an innocence that could almost be labelled artistic.

Still, a few small details have yet to be ironed out. Your character carries a candle around with him at all times. If you go swimming, it remains lit the instant you pop back out of the water.

Your little scamp has a fair degree of freedom of movement, and more resembles Mario 64 than Crash in terms of gameplay. This makes for a more reasoned quest through open terrain, as opposed to the railroaded simplicity of the Bandicoot's Luge racing.

NECK AND NECK WITH THE N64?

It's interesting to note that *Forty Winks* is being developed simultaneously for the PlayStation and Nintendo 64. This suggests that the final product, in seeking to be feasible on both platforms, could fall short of the expectations of a given console's aficionados.

'PLAY INVOLVES RUNNING UPSTAIRS AND DOWNSTAIRS IN YOUR NIGHTGOWN'



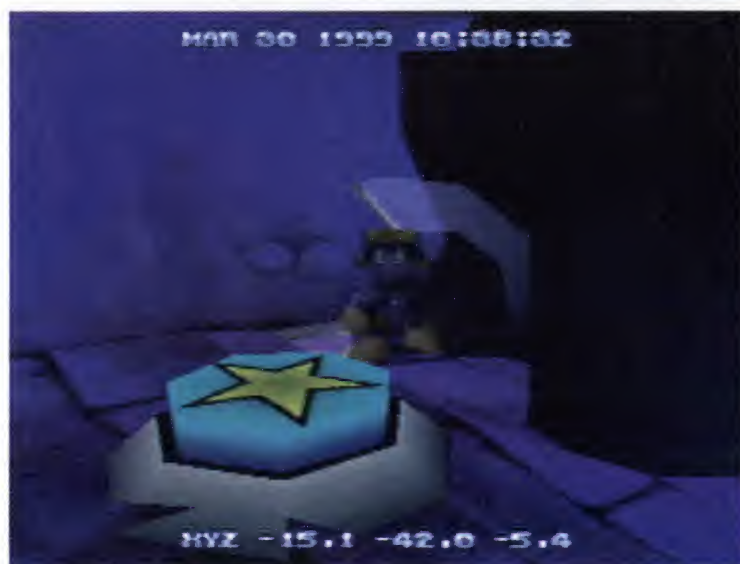
▲ 40 Winks looks like it will surely complement its lush graphical detail with original character designs, interfaces, and puzzles

Specifically, the worlds could be of limited size and scope. *Forty Winks* already has a brilliant musical score, and looks as good as any N64 title.

It's ironic that *Forty Winks* is also reminiscent of Commander Keen. Id software got halfway through Commander Keen 7, Keen Dreams before they came to their senses, dropped everything and made Doom.

If this title maintains the high standards we've seen so far, then *Forty Winks* will be the most lavish platformer yet seen on the PlayStation.

James Cottee



POSITIVE POINTS

- Great visual design
- Creative ideas for an old genre

NEGATIVE POINTS

- A bad case of Johnny-come-lately to the genre
- Fidgety camera controls

Farland Saga

Classic story-telling weaved into a turn-based strategy game

Farland Saga has many similar features to an ordinary RPG but its combat system is really what distinguishes it as a turn-based strategy more than a role-playing game.

The story elements and character development are much more similar to an RPG, and so RPG fans may find this appealing if they can come to grips with a combat system that requires much more strategic planning.

The story is *Farland Saga*'s main attraction, and TGL have definitely put a lot of effort into making these sections enjoyable. All of the characters are anime-styled and display many different character traits common in the art form.

TGL have even gone as far as having most of the character dialogue voice acted which makes the story sections quite interesting to watch.



'THE STORY FOR FARLAND SAGA IS THE MOST ATTRACTIVE PART OF THIS GAME'



▲ The attraction of the game is in the dialogue and cute character designs

The story is mostly about a girl named Karin who arrived at a new town and subsequently knocks out a young homeless boy. Needing a job, she goes to the Guild but is turned away because she apparently doesn't have enough skills on her own. On



returning to her lodgings, she finds out that the boy she KO'ed is a swordsman. Returning to the Guild with her newfound friend and partner, they get a job and head out on their first sortie.

The game itself looks mildly interesting. *Farland Saga* is a turn-

based strategy game. This means moving your characters around on a grid of squares, positioning them next to enemies before attacking.

When you've finished your turn, your opponent is then given the chance to make his moves and attacks and then control is passed back to you. This style of gameplay requires a lot more planning and can be a little slow for some but it can be more relaxing than an average RPG for others.

The graphics are simple and cute. The character designs are anime style and well drawn for the dialogue sections even though they are mostly stills. The sprites are small but the animations for the character sprites are very smooth and similarly cute with details like flowing hair for when Karin runs.

As said before, the story for *Farland Saga* is the most attractive part of this game. Its presentation is one of the more exciting ways of story telling.

The version of *Farland Saga* we were given is the Japanese release. Naturally, the voice acting is very good for the most part and cute as well. This

may change for the PAL release and we may either get a poor quality English substitute or lose the speech altogether.

I'm not advocating that anything in English is bad but most releases of Japanese games in English tend to lose a lot of the vibrance and emotion that makes the original so appealing. Having said that, there have been instances where English voice acting is good but this is rare at best. We can always hope.

With few turn-based strategies in the PAL market, *Farland Saga* would make a welcome addition to rare genre. Look for a full review in later issues.

Aaron Lai

POSITIVE POINTS

- Enthralling story and great presentation within the game

NEGATIVE POINTS

- Turn-based gameplay may be a put off for some

Guilty Gear

Capcom and SNK finally get some real competition

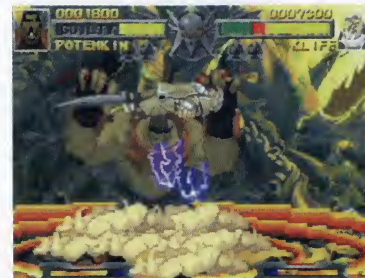
Whilst 2D fighting games are a rather foreign and dated concept to the new generation gaming community, they nevertheless form the backbone of gaming for those of us who witnessed the progression from sprite-based games to polygonal gaming.

A game like *Street Fighter*, for instance, whilst unfortunately not greeted with the same enthusiasm as it was 6 years ago, is still an undeniably fantastic game. This is the basis upon which our focus is now being drawn to *Guilty Gear*, a veritable 'dark horse' title that surprised all of us with its quality of design and execution.

As far as the story goes, *Guilty Gear* leaves it all to the imagination. Basically, you're given a cast of 10 characters to choose from, and you embark upon a quest to unlock the secrets of the *Guilty Gear*. Naturally, this quest entails a fight, possibly to the death, with the other characters in the game.

Graphically, *Guilty Gear* has the distinguished honour of being the first 2D fighting game with decent graphics. You see, *Guilty Gear* was developed in Japan long before *Street Fighter Alpha 3*.

It was the first game to demonstrate to other developers how to produce more frames of animation, better quality sounds, and better visual effects in a genre that, at least as far as the PlayStation is concerned, had previously been plagued by choppy animations, reduced colour palettes, and scratchy sound effects.



'POSSIBLY THE BEST FIGHTING ENGINE EVER CONCEIVED'

DYNAMIC CAMERA WORK

Some of the graphical features include large sprite-based characters of a strong anime/post-industrial design, brought to life by wondrously fluid animation. Team Neo Blood, the development team responsible for this, should be proud of themselves.

The camera constantly zooms in and out of the action with little detectable pixellation, and the special moves are all supplemented by transparencies and traditional hand-drawn special effects.

A FIGHTING FAN'S DELIGHT

The appeal of *Guilty Gear* for fighting fans, however, will be more for the fact that it features possibly the best fighting engine ever conceived.

The controls and gameplay concepts are common sense, and they correct many of the flaws we have come to take for granted in other industry-established fighting games like *Street Fighter*.

For instance, the number of hits you can perform in one combo is limited by your ability to string together a logical set of attacks, and the attacks can continue indefinitely until you've won the round, run out of steam in your fingers, or get countered by your opponent.

Guilty Gear also offers counters and super counters that can be executed at any time with a flick of the wrist, without having to build up a ridiculous meter. This is potentially the most dynamic offensive fighting game, the likes of which were only touched upon with the Hold manoeuvre in Tecmo's *Dead or Alive*.

Every fight is fast and filled with non-stop action where the hits, kicks, slashes, and attacks just fly back and forth in wild animated glory. You have the ability to charge up the power of your next projectile attack by performing a quarter-spin forward and keeping your finger down on the R1 button.

The power can go up to 3 levels, and do horrendous damage. What this adds is a wonderful strategic element to the action. The end result is a game that combines the controls of *Street Fighter*, the mountainous non-offensive trickery of *King of Fighters*, the coolest array of weapons this side of *Samurai Spirits*, and the imagination of *Vampire Savior*.

Guilty Gear has already been released in the US, and it will be a shocking disappointment for fans of the genre should it be passed up for an Australian release. We will keep you posted on this one.

Kevin Cheung

▲ The special effects make *Guilty Gear* one of the most impressive fighters ever



POSITIVE POINTS

- Excellent visuals
- The best fighting engine we have seen in ages

NEGATIVE POINTS

- Heavy metal soundtrack
- Imbalanced fatality system

Rising Zan

A samurai-cowboy terrorising the Wild Wild West. What next?



FINISHING MOVE

Cutting the enemy in two

ZAN POWER



After defeating a big boss Zan prepares to perform a special finishing move. By rapidly pressing all the buttons on the pad you get to build up Zan's power. Then you dish it out on the second part by rapidly pressing the attack buttons. Depending on how much damage you've inflicted Zan performs the final finishing cut, splitting the enemy in two.

Having given Playstation owners the cool Coolboarders series, UEP Systems have taken their 3D engine and tried something entirely new on it.

What they have come up with is unique, strange and even ridiculous at first glance but after playing around with it for a while, it's turning out to be a extremely hilarious and playable game in its own right.

ZAN'S STORY

The story is set around the Wild West of America and revolves around a brash young man named Johnny. When his hometown is attacked one day, he immediately goes out to fight the unknown forces who are responsible for the outrage.

However despite his skills at the gun, he is defeated easily at the hands of the enemy. His late father's friend takes care of Johnny and teaches him the ancient samurai fighting techniques of Zipang. Now skilled at the gun and sword he adopts a new name "Zan" and sets out once again to free his hometown.

When you start a game you are taken through the training stage which introduces you to all the relevant techniques that Zan knows.

The first two rooms teach you all movement and defensive techniques. These include blocking, sidestepping, deflection, jumping and long jumping.

The next few rooms teach you the offensive moves, with the sword and the gun. Both weapons have normal and

special attacks. Training ends when you can defeat the Super Wood Man at the end of the training area.

The game mechanics are very much like Shogun Assassins and Tenchu with a great emphasis on combat. There are a lot of enemies to dispatch before meeting the boss character for the level.

ENEMIES AND TRAPS

The enemy characters in Rising Zan range in difficulty from ones that are cut down in a single stroke to big dudes that require cunning and wit to defeat. This ensures that there is a decent amount of variety to the killing action on screen.

In addition to the various enemies, *Rising Zan* throws in some very clever tricks and traps to toy with your intellect.



▲ Glamour-effects are part of the unique charm offered by Rising Zan

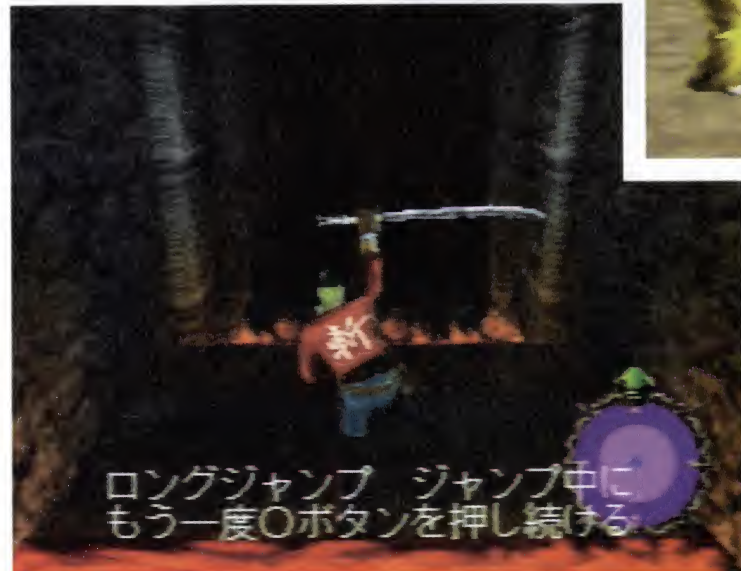


▲ When the going gets tough, demolish your enemies with your magic sword

'THE WHOLE GAME ISN'T CONCERNED WITH JUST KILLING ENEMIES'

For example there is a point in the game where Zan is lured into a hall and a giant bomb is dropped on him. At this point you have to press all the buttons rapidly so that Zan throws the bomb off before it blows him to kingdom come.

There are other similar traps scattered throughout the game, including fending off a sumo machine and running through a wind tunnel. The whole game isn't concerned with just killing enemies. You see, most of the town's people have been captured and are being held in various secluded areas of the level. It's your job to free them as you progress through the level.



▲ This is part of the training sequence where you must hone your samurai skills

EASY GUNSLINGING CONTROLS

Controlling Zan is easy and he moves very freely and responsively in the game. For the most part the D-pad controls where Zan moves relative to the camera. Attacking enemies requires you to face them before Zan will swipe in the right direction.

The L1 button can lock Zan on to a single target and keep him locked until he is hit or the target destroyed. Changing targets is a simple matter of pressing L1 again.



Special moves are executed by a combination of directions and the slash button and some are visually impressive. The second set of shoulder buttons allow you to side-step in the corresponding directions. In addition to the special moves, Zan also has a super meter.

The meter builds as you take out enemies and once it's full, Zan can unleash its power. He gets faster, his sword gets longer and his weapons do more damage. Zan can build a maximum of 3 supers and save them for tight spots. *Rising Zan* is challenging. As you progress to the later levels, the enemies get more difficult to defeat and traps are much more complex and dangerous.

WILD WILD FMVS

The FMVs in *Rising Zan* are excellent pieces of cinematics nearly rivaling the quality and direction of the ones in *Metal Gear*. The in-game graphics of *Rising Zan* are on par with similar games in the same genre.

The character models for Zan and the enemies are a little blocky but well constructed nonetheless. The rest of the graphical effects are done in style with many of the special moves and attacks looking very flash and exciting.

The sound quality is very good at this stage. At one point, I wasn't sure whether they had finished the speech sections for some of the bosses because they were some weird sounds. It sounds hilarious the way it is at the moment but they might change for the final release.

Rising Zan is a unique game and the developers obviously had their tongues in their cheeks as they were creating this. Obviously, there are an obscene number of third person action games that smack of being a *Tomb Raider* clone.

It's better a game like *Duke Nukem: A Time to Kill* has given us the example of a game that at least tries to be original through character and wit, rather than relying on the draw-power of a game where critics like us compare it to *Tomb Raider*. *Rising Zan* is looking like it may be a hit, so look out for a full review in future.

Aaron Lai

POSITIVE POINTS

- Hilarious. Lots of moves. Controls responsive. Great visuals

NEGATIVE POINTS

- Targeting system a bit dodgy
- Camera not where you need it

Tomorrow Never Dies

Nobody does it better. Makes me feel sad for the rest

While the PlayStation seems to have conquered the gaming world with its hundreds of titles and innumerable classics, there is one sticking point that has PSX owners choking awkwardly on their cucumber sandwiches when visiting their N64 owning chums. Goldeneye.

This was the best film adaptation and best first-person shooter (on a console) ever made. PlayStation owners, while immersed in the pleasures their grey consoles bring, have been nagged by twinges of doubt over the absence of a conversion for better than two years.

muscling in on Rupert Murdoch's territory, M16 has sent you, Bond, James Bond, in to investigate.

The usual orders apply, "Don't wreck the car," "Under no circumstances are you to engage the enemy," and so on, but as soon as he's strapped on his homing device he shags the first woman to step on screen. And the next. And the next.

This is hardly the basis for a family-oriented adventure game, so *Tomorrow Never Dies* makes do with violence. You run through a variety of exotic international locations, mowing down countless Kalashnikov-brandishing thugs.



▲ ▼ TND has scenes straight from the movie, and others that aren't...



▲ ▼ Classic Bond action: kill your enemies, then sail away in a parachute

'THESE OVER-THE-TOP CHASE SCENES ARE WHAT BOND FILMS ARE ALL ABOUT'

SIMILAR GAMEPLAY

Now their hopes may finally have been realised. *Tomorrow Never Dies*, the next film off the James Bond assembly line, has lent its game licensing to the PlayStation. Employing similar gameplay and mechanics, it hopes to balance the unnatural blasphemy of there being a Nintendo title unmatched on the PSX.

Eliot Carver, ruthless media tycoon and insane megalomaniac is on the brink of starting WWII just so his cable network can get the best coverage of armageddon. Presumably because he's

Sometimes they are Commies, sometimes they're terrorists, and more than a few are corporate goons.

The final version was not available for preview, but the action was already looking very nice. The bad guys are sinister hoonos who dash about, crouching and doing commando rolls to avoid your fire. You yourself can also crouch and strafe, and as you have a third-person view of Jimbo, the action has a more arcade feel than Goldeneye.

When you fire on the enemy, the camera zooms in over your shoulder to

better view the flash from the muzzle and the spitting of brass. R1 will zoom in even further, giving a first person view through the sights of your weapon.

Admittedly this feature has been borrowed from Goldeneye, and after pulling off a few head shots you'll see why. Together with a sniper rifle it's unmatched for taking out horizon-hugging Russkies, who fall from their watchtowers with satisfying desperation.

While running around with an AK is the primary game mode, there are also bonus stages where you can drive or ski. These over-the-top chase scenes are what Bond films are all about.

Nothing beats knocking over a horde of Commies while skiing down a mountain, only to escape on a union jack parachute. I don't remember it being in the film, but who cares?

Since it's release, Goldeneye has been the primary argument for Nintendo owners intent on proving the worth of their system. Nothing yet has even come close to reproducing Goldeneye's bladder-emptying effect in a first person shooter on the PlayStation.

Tomorrow Never Dies is making a tall order going up against the namesake of the previous movie, in time to make an impact before the conversion of the next.

The World Is Not Enough will have its own conversion hot on the heels of the cinema release in September. *Tomorrow Never Dies* will only have one shot at success, but the potential is more than there. The latest beta we saw was looking good, and at this rate the definitive Bond experience could be moving to the PlayStation.

James Cottee

POSITIVE POINTS

- Not half bad graphics and sound
- 2 player deathmatch mode

NEGATIVE POINTS

- Stilted controls
- Film adaptations are dreadful

THEY SAY THE DEAD
KNOW NO PAIN...

"If you only buy one game this year, make
sure it is Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver"

AUSTRALIAN PLAYSTATION

"Best of all, the transition between
planes involves the scenery morphing
from one guise to the next before
your very eyes...Astounding!"

OFFICIAL UK PLAYSTATION

"If it's a cool game overflowing
with great new ideas you're after,
our money's on Soul Reaver"

PLAYSTATION PLUS



THINGS ARE
ABOUT TO
CHANGE



LEGACY of KAIN SOUL REAVER

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TENCHU: Stealth Assassins Playguide

TENCHU: STEALTH ASSASSINS IS A HARD GAME TO BEAT. SURE, ANYONE CAN FINISH ONE OF THE EASIER STAGES WITHOUT DYING, BUT HOW MANY CAN YOU SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE WITHOUT BEING SEEN AT ALL? THIS PLAYGUIDE WAS WRITTEN TO HELP ALL THOSE STRUGGLING WITH THE GAME TO FINISH IT SO THEY CAN SEE THE PRETTY ENDING SEQUENCE. IF AT ANY TIME YOU GET WELL AND TRULY STUCK, TRY THE DEBUG CODE AT THE END OF THIS GUIDE FOR ALL MANNER OF CHEATING ASSISTANCE. BUT DON'T DO IT TO YOURSELF UNLESS YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST.

This entire game can be clocked with Grand Master status all the way, as long as you learn how to read the guards. Every moving guard in Tenchu follows a simple pattern. They walk thirteen steps, regardless of the route that their beat (set path) dictates, and then they turn to look straight at you.

You can tell whether they're turning to look at you or turning because of their beat, by measuring the time they pause. When they turn to look at you, they pause for about two seconds before moving on.

One point of advice is that you slash your victims from about a metre away rather than perform those elegant killing moves. That way you won't be caught up in the killing animation, giving other guards time to notice you. With bosses, there is only one way to fight. Wait until they attack and

block it, then run forward and perform a three-hit combo. If you are Ayame, never attack four times in a combo - the last strike leaves you open for damage if the enemy manages to block it.

STAGE ONE

PUNISH THE EVIL MERCHANT

Take: Riceballs, Crimson Blades, Mines

First grapple up to the wall in front of you. You'll be standing on the corner of the merchant's estate now, so follow the wall around to the left. When you come to a low wall leading off to the right, run along it until you come to some rooftops. Go straight and duck into the attic on your left. Echigoya is in the room below, molesting the ancillary staff.

After disposing of Echigoya's bodyguard, grapple back up to the attic and retrace your step exactly until you reach the junction of the low and high walls. The grain storage barn on your right contains the evil Echigoya. Beware: he has a gun.

STAGE TWO

DELIVER THE SECRET MESSAGE

Take: Riceballs, Crimson Blades, and Coloured Rice

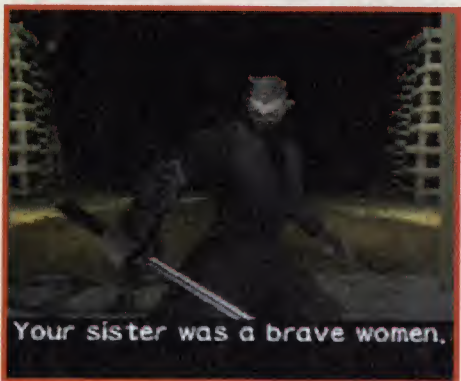
This one is hard primarily because of the roof-crawling adversaries you'll come across. The evil ninja in this stage look a bit more freaky than those in the first, but they act in a pretty much identical manner. The only difference is that some of them can climb up to, or are stationed on, the rooftops. There are dogs around too, so be wary.

Staying on the ground and sticking to back alleys all the way, go as straight as you can in the direction you start off facing. At every single corner you come to, hug the wall to peer down the next passage. When you have to pass by an alley that leads onto the main road, perform a roll across the gap to make sure nobody sees you. When you reach the bridge, crawl the rest of the way, keeping a close eye on your bad guy detector.

STAGE THREE

FREE THE CAPTIVE NINJA

Start by finding the stone cliff perimeter of the trees. Follow it around to the right. You can enter the caves and kill their inhabitants if you wish, but only one cave leads to the imprisoned ninja. You can tell which one it is because it is the only one that goes straight into the cliff, with a slight rise in the ground about ten



TENCHU: Stealth Assassins Playguide

metres into it. The others are just distracting detours and dead ends, but you can still do them if you want extra kill points.

The first junction has two main paths, to the left and straight ahead. There is also a narrow passage in between them you should take. Follow it to a corner and peer around the edge without being seen. Go through the cell and carefully take a right when you leave it, entering a long hall-like cavern. You should now be going uphill. Beware the pitfall at the top of the rise.

Next is a narrow walkway with a bottomless pit on either side. The best way to approach it is dead straight. This can be achieved by hugging a wall sideways and rolling off it, or hanging from the pitfall and climbing up. Either method will put you perfectly in line with the walkway.

Halfway across, you may be almost spotted by a guard, so be ready to crouch and roll backwards in a hurry. If there is no guard, or after you kill him, run halfway across the catwalk and jump to the lower doorway on your right. Try not to fall off. Follow the passage up to the first intersection, wary of the guard(s). Take a left and go up further, through the door, following the passage until you reach a short sharp hill. The boss Goo awaits you at the top, but don't go up just yet. Stand a bit less than halfway up the rise and jump once. You'll attract the attention of Goo's helpers. Lead them back down the ramp and finish them off before attempting to kill Goo.

STAGE FOUR

CROSS THE CHECKPOINT

Take: Riceballs, Crimson Blades, Grenades, Health Potions

This is one of the added levels which the Japanese didn't get, and it also happens to be one of the best stages in the whole game. Its geographical layout allows you to complete it following any number of different routes, each of which might work better depending on the particular layout of the guards. A good start, after defeating the halberd-wielding sentry at the gate, is to grapple up to the top of the wall, avoiding the torches.

A great vantage point that this stage offers over others is in the branches. If you can grapple up to the trees, you'll get a helpful perspective of the stationing of nearby guards and possibly be able to grapple to other branches.

Make your way with caution across the river, either by wading through it or by taking the bridge. Both paths are strewn with sentries, so be wary. Keep going in the same general direction through the camp, using the bamboo thickets to hide behind. Be sure to find the goodies atop the two wooden structures near the rear gates before doing battle with the second boss.

STAGE FIVE

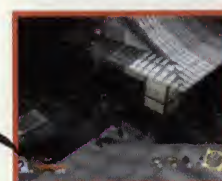
EXECUTE THE CORRUPT MINISTER

Take: Riceballs, Crimson Blades, Health Potions if you are Ayame

The whole mission can be accomplished without

dealing with more than one or two of the sentries inside the estate, so long as you stay on the roof.

The corrupt minister's personal bodyguard is in the opposite corner of the map to the one you start in. Make your way there on the roof until you see the well that he is standing next to (he's the fat guy). Make sure that there are no other nearby guards well before confronting and killing him. An arrow well aimed will finish him straight off and you must then head in the direction the arrow came from. The minister is in the archery range. As Ayame, he attacks you with three successive arrows and then he hits you with his bow if you get too close.



STAGE SIX

INFILTRATE THE MANJI CULT

The deranged cultists are nearly naked and the guards have pants on. The cultists move the same as everyone else but are unarmed, preferring to burn you with their flame breath rather than attack with weapons. If you fight one of them make sure you keep hitting them before they get a chance to breathe fire.

TENCHU: Stealth Assassins Playguide

From the start the rooftops are the safest place to be. Although most of the cult's population are indoors and therefore out of sight when you're on the roof, you don't need to kill them all. It's better to just get to the keep and finish the job without being seen than to go around killing every single guard and cultist, probably losing your cover along the way.

The keep is where the statue and bosses are, being the large square building on the map. There are usually two sentries outside guarding the door. The best way to kill them is by throwing some poisoned rice to one side and then slashing them both from behind.

Climbing up to the head of the statue will trigger off the first boss. Do it only when you know it's safe. This fat git is the easiest boss in the whole game. You can just keep attacking it, not giving it a chance to retaliate. Onikage is another story.

STAGE SEVEN

DESTROY THE FOREIGN PIRATES

Take: Riceballs, Crimson Blades, Grenades, Mines

If you're spotted, the pirates will start shooting at you, which hurts and is hard to avoid, so stay hidden.

Firstly, crawl across the bridge, then eliminate the first pirate you see. Your destination is directly to your left now so head in that direction, along the canal. You can climb up to the rooftops here as there are very few guards up there, if any. When the buildings end and there are some trees, look out for a couple more guards. Get down to the ground and continue past the trees. You should see a huge ship berthed in the harbour. Kill all nearby pirates before boarding the ship. If there is a pirate on the ship, wait until he is facing away from the boarding plank before boarding.

STAGE EIGHT

CURE THE PRINCESS

Take: Riceballs, Crimson Blades, Mines

This is one of the hardest levels in the game because of all the deadly pitfalls and cliff edges. The demon ninjas are also highly dangerous, but only if you disturb them of course. From the start, go straight, killing wolves when you see them and hiding behind trees to avoid being seen by the demons. It's pretty much a linear path until you come to a walkway crossing a deep chasm. Cross it and turn right. Climb up to the left and grapple across the waterfall gap. Keep grappling up wherever possible.

It is almost impossible to pass this stage without being seen, so you may as well go out of your way to kill as many unsuspecting demon ninjas as possible. Keep going up and you'll find the herb.

STAGE NINE

RECAPTURE THE CASTLE

Take: Riceballs, Grenades, Health Potions, Mines

Some say you can grapple straight up to the roof of the keep from outside, but this has never been successfully achieved on a PAL version of the game. The demons are evil bastards with too much life, so you don't want to get into a fight with them.

Grapple over the main entrance and cautiously grapple up to the perimeter of the castle. The big building in front of you is the keep and the entrance to it is right there too. Chuck some poisoned rice down to see if there is anyone down there, kill them, jump down and enter the keep. Hug the doorway to see if anyone is in the first room. At the back of the building are some stairs going up. Continue up the stairs until you meet Onikage once again.

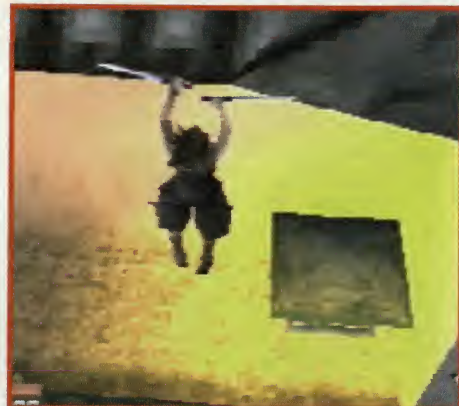
STAGE TEN

RESCUE THE PRINCESS

Take: Grenades (10), Health Potions, Crimson Blades, Magic Leaf

When fighting Mei-O, throw a grenade at him to knock him down. Position yourself about ten feet away and throw another, just as he starts to move again. Continue to do this until he is dead.

THE CODE: Pause the game, hold L1 & R2 and press Up, Δ, Down, X, Left, □, Right, O. Release the shoulder buttons and press L1, R1, L2, R2. Hit Start again and press L2 & R2 together.



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HELPSTATION

MISS NURSE WANTS YOU!

Can't find the magic glowing rabbit to get past the third squid boss in the underwater city? Stuck in the boiler room of the old factory? Do you require some level skip codes and invincibility cheats to feel like a real PlayStation success? Write to Ms Nurse. She may just help you!



WRITE TO:

AUSTRALIAN PLAYSTATION MAG

Level 6, 418a Elizabeth St, Surry Hills NSW 2010

Email: playstation@next.com.au

ALIEN TRILOGY

LEVEL SELECT

Get into the carnage quicker with this code. At the password screen, enter "GOLVL" followed by the level you desire. (i.e. "GOLVL14" for level 14.) The words "Cheat Enabled" will appear.

ULTIMATE CHEAT

For all weapons, unlimited firepower, invincibility and access to all levels, then enter the password 1GOTP1NK8C1DBOOTSON.

AKUJI THE HEARTLESS

DEBUG MODE

Pause the game then hold L2 or R2 and press Left, Up, Up, Δ, Right, □, Left, Δ, Up, Down, Right, Right.

INFINITE SPIRIT SPELLS

After you've acquired the Spirit spell, pause the game then hold L2 or R2 and press Left, Δ, Left, Left, O, Left, Δ, Right, O, Up, Up, Down. You must repeat this whenever you pick up a Spirit spell.

INVINCIBILITY

Pause the game, then hold L2 or R2 and press Right, Right, Left, Δ, X, Up, O, Left.

BUSHIDO BLADE

AREA CHANGE IN 2 PLAYER MODE

Both Players must do this at the same time. It is really simple, just go to a flat wall and run against it for a minute or two and it will open up to a new area of that level. **NOTE:** some levels like the bamboo thicket do not work in this situation.

ENABLE KATZE

To play as the awesome boss with the gun (Katze) beat Slash mode on hard without continuing. He is selectable in 2 player mode only.

BUSHIDO BLADE



BUSHIDO BLADE



REAL ENDING

Do not touch anything on the control pad until you hear the character's weapon click into place. Do not kill him from behind. Do not kill him on the ground. Do not use your subweapon. The Bushido is hard to follow on the gun guy.

COLIN MCRAE RALLY

CHEAT CODES

Enter one of these when asked to enter your name:

- PEASOUPER** Adds fog to all stages
- BUTTONBASH** Power accelerator
- HELIUMNICK** Co-driver has a squeaky voice
- DIRECTORCUT** Allows you to play with replay
- KITCAR** Gives you a turbo boost (press SELECT as the green bar's full)
- MOREOOMP** Double engine power
- FORKLIFT** Rear wheel steer Trolley - Gives your car special 4 wheel steering.

GREEN JELLY CAR

Enter BLANCMANGE as a name. Then, start a game in rally or time trial mode to race in a wobbly car.

PLAY IN THE DARK

To race in the dark on any level enter your name as NIGHTRIDER and then start any race plus you will notice that some of the blocked of roads are now open. If you go down them then the car will stop and the lights will go off, then a beam of light will flash on to the car and lift it in to the air.

CROC: LEGEND OF THE GOBBOS

KEEP FROM DYING IN A FALL

If you miss a jump, pause the game before Croc starts his yell. Press Select, choose Quit game, then select NO. When given the Quit game options, press down, and neither Continue or Quit games will be highlighted. Press X, and you will be given to option to quit the level. You can then restart the level with no lives lost.

LEVEL SELECT

For access to all of the levels, including the secret island, enter Left, Left, Left, Left, Down, Right, Right, Left, Left, Down, Right, Down, Left, Up, Right.



HELPSTATION

COLIN McRAE RALLY



COLIN McRAE RALLY



COLIN McRAE RALLY



CROC



LEVEL PASSWORDS FOR CROC

LEVEL 1-1	U L L L D D U L U L U R R U
LEVEL 1-2	U L L L D D U L U R D R R U
LEVEL 1-3	R U L U L U R L R U R L U D
LEVEL 1-B1	D L U R L D R L R L R D L L
LEVEL 1-4	U R D L L D D U L R R D R R U
LEVEL 1-5	R D D U L U R L U U R L U D
LEVEL 1-6	D R R R L D R L R D R D L L
LEVEL 1-B2	D R U R R R R L L L L R U L L
LEVEL 2-1	R D L U R R U R L R U R L U D
LEVEL 2-2	D R U R R L R L R L R D L L
LEVEL 2-3	R L R R R R R L L L L L U L L
LEVEL 2-B1	U L D L R L D U L R R D R R U
LEVEL 2-4	R D D U R L U R L R D R R U D
LEVEL 2-5	L U U U L U D U D R U L U L D
LEVEL 2-6	R U L U R D U R U R D R R U D
LEVEL 2-B2	D L U R R U R L U L L L L L
LEVEL 3-1	R U D U R D U R U R U R R U D
LEVEL 3-2	R U D U R D U R U R D L R U D

WARP TO THE END

Enter this magic little password to warp all the way to the end of the game: Left, Left, Left, Left, Down, Right, Right, Left, Left, Down, Right, Down, Left, Up, Right.

DIE HARD TRILOGY

CHANGE ENEMY VOICES

To change the voices of the enemy on Die Hard press Start and hold R2 then press: Right, Up, Down, Down, □, □, Right. If done correctly you should hear the enemy talk in a "chipmunk" voice. If done again you will make the enemy have a low voice. If done a third time you will set the enemy voice back to normal.

CHEAT CODES

To use these cheat codes, pause the game and hold R2 while entering the desired code.

DIE HARD 1

GOD MODE

Right, Up, Down, □

50 GRENADES AND 5 BULLETS

Right, □, Down, O

FAT MODE

Right, □, □, Down

VILLAINS FLOAT UPWARDS WHEN SHOT

Down, □, △, Down

FORWARD IS BACKWARD AND VICE VERSA

Right, □, △, Right

COORDINATES

Left, O, Down, □

PLANT SCREAM WHEN SHOT

O, O, □, □, Right

SKELETON MODE

△ x 10, 4 Rights



DIE HARD 1



DIE HARD 1



DIE HARD 1



SILLY MODE

Down, O, O, Down, △, Down

15 BULLETS

Down, □, □, Right

UNLIMITED SHOTGUN AMMO

Right, Up, Down, Down, □, Right

DIE HARD 2

MAP EDITOR

Right, Up, Down, □

SKELETON MODE

Down, □, △, Down

LOTS OF AMMO

Right, □, Left, O, △, Down

FAT MODE

Left, △, Right, and Down

EVERYONE LOOKS ALIKE

O, Down, Down, □, X, □

DIE HARD 3

FAT MODE

Left, △, Right, Down

EVERYONE LOOKS ALIKE

O, Down, Down, △, X, □

CAR FLOATS IN AIR

Right, □, Left, △, X, □, Down

EVERYTHING IS IN FLAT MODE

Down, Up, Left, Left, Down, Up, Left, Left, Down, Up, Left, Left

SLOW MOTION

Left, Up, Left, Left, □, Down

SKY CAM MODE

O, Right, Down, □, △, Left

VERY SLOW MOTION

O, Down, Down, □, Right

FUZZY DICE IN CAR

Right, O, Left, Left, □, Down

999 TURBOS

O, O, □, □, Down, Down, X, X

INFINITE LIVES

Left, O, Up, Down, □, Right



HELPSTATION

DIE HARD 2



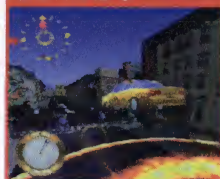
DIE HARD 2



DIE HARD 2



DIE HARD 3



DIE HARD 3



EXTRA WEAPONS

There are several caches of weapons and ammo hidden in this game. Here's how to find a few:

BERETTA AND UNLIMITED CLIPS

At the start of the first level shoot the Helicopter and you will get the beretta and have unlimited clips.

BERETTA: In the second level after clearing the room destroy the crates and you should have a Beretta as your default weapon!

M16: As soon as people in the second wave start to shoot at you throw a grenade. The screen flashes "M16". Now the M16 is your default weapon.

MP5: When you get to the church level, shoot the very first guy who has the red O around him. After you kill him, the screen should say "MP5".

LEVEL SELECT AND STOP THE CLOCK & MORE
To turn the clock off in Die Hard 3, Level 1 use the first controller and pause the game. Then hold the R2 button and press Right, Up, Down, □. If done correctly you will see numbers on the screen. Then on the second controller, hit START and it will say "Hit Δ to toggle the game clock."

TO SKIP A LEVEL

To skip a level in this mode, press LEFT or RIGHT on controller two's D-pad, press O to advance to the next bomb, or press □ to reset the game.

PLAY AS AN ALIEN SHIP

To change your car into an alien ship, go to the Central Park level on Die Hard with a vengeance. Enter this password to get there:

**XJ1GFT!7XMLG9 T74XMLD3K72X!
LG82RC8VMZKSH HXWQZWM7GVHSJ**

At the beginning of the level, pause the game and go to Quit, but don't quit. Hold R2 and press Right, □, Δ, Down, X, X, X. You'll then see the Roswell Screen. Return to the game and notice the differences!

RIDE A BABY STROLLER

To ride in a baby stroller, make your way to the "rain" level. As soon as you can drive, perform a 180° turn. If you did it right, a cop car races past you. Follow the cop (or the blue arrow if you lose sight of him) until you reach a parking lot. Here you will find an extra life, a time bonus, and a baby stroller you can ride!

RIDE A GARBAGE TRUCK

On level 1, drive in the wrong direction. A blue arrow appears. If you follow it, you can drive a garbage truck.

RIDE A SCHOOL BUS

In level 9 (Chin2) make it to the first car chase and follow the truck. You will soon come to a parking lot where you can choose to become a school bus.

S.W.A.T. BACKUP

To get help from the police (or S.W.A.T) in the first Die Hard, pause the game and then hit Δ x 20, □ x 8, and O x 10. If done correctly you should see the S.W.A.T team come down on ropes and break into the windows. This doesn't work in the parking garage since there are no windows.

UNLIMITED BERETTA CLIPS

If you have a beretta, use all but 1 bullet before you exit the level. As you're running into the elevator fire the final bullet. If you did it right you'll have unlimited beretta ammo in the next level.

EINHÄNDER

BONUS SHIPS

If you beat the game on easy without continuing OR earn 15 skill bonuses, you'll get a new ship to select. It looks like one of the flying cars in the first area. If you beat the game on hard without continuing, you'll get a ship that has 9999 for the gunpods it finds or has equipped.

GALLERY MODE

To unlock Gallery Mode, beat the game at any difficulty.

HIDDEN WEAPONS:

JUNO: Has the rate of fire of a Vulcan, and the power of a normal gunshot, per bullet.

STAGE 1: Gain all three skill bonuses (destroy all gun carriers until neon signs, then destroy red carrier after signs; destroy all neon signs; destroy only bottom saucer section of mid-boss.) When you reach the boss, don't attack him as normal. Wait for him to move to you (with the side-scrolling view.) One of his attacks is a gun pod from his back. Once in every 10 or so time, this weapon is the Juno.

STAGE 4: A large boat will pop out of the water. Destroy the body only. The tower will fly off. Dodge and kill this tower before it leaves the screen. It will drop the Juno and give you a skill bonus.

EINHÄNDER



HELPSTATION

FLASH: Similar to the Cannon, can kill any non-boss enemy in fewer than 3 shots.

STAGE 3: After spider mid-boss, destroy the pylon at the top of the screen, and destroy every item that falls from it. Use a Juno or Vulcan for success. This will award a skill bonus and the Flash.

STAGE 5: Take apart the mid-boss piece by piece before killing him. This earns Flash and a skill bonus.

MOSQUITO: Similar to the Wasp, fires missiles which are guided by the control pad. A little stronger than the Wasp's missiles.



STAGE 4: At the small maze-like section, move as quickly as possible down the tunnels, and pick up the Spreader on the way. Switch the Spreader to your top slot. A couple of floors straight down will be an enemy and a set of barrels directly behind you. Destroy the barrels to obtain the Mosquito.

PYTHON: Powerful mines, similar to Hedgehog. Very hard to use.

STAGE 5: Destroy vehicle in the background of the first part of the stage. Must use Wasp. Ships can come at you from all directions, so watch out!

GRAND THEFT AUTO

AVOID HITTING PEDESTRIANS

Hate running over people and having the cops jump on your back? Press the "special" button to honk the horn while in a car. This will slightly decrease the chance of running over a pedestrian.

CAR BOMB

When you start out on a level steal a car, but don't pick a big one or else the trick will be harder. Then keep searching for a garage door kinda thing that has an X coming out from it. Enter that place and your car will be rigged or in other words bombed. Then stop the car somewhere and press the FIRE button your car will be armed so get out of it within about five seconds or you will BLOW up! This trick is useful for jobs, killing and collecting money.

NOTE: You MUST have at least \$5,000 dollars or you will not be able to get your car rigged.

CHEAT CODES

Rename your character to one of these when starting:

GROOVY	All Weapons
WEYHEY	9,999,990 points
BLOWME	Coordinates
EATTHIS	Wanted Level Max
THESHIT	All items
TURF	All Cities
MADEMAN	All Cities and Weapons
BSTARD	All Cities, Infinite Weapons, 99 lives
FECK	Liberty City Part 1 and 2
TVTAN	San Andreas Part 1 and 2

GRAND THEFT AUTO



SATANLIVES	99 Lives
EXCREMENT	x5 Multiplier
CHUFF	No Police
PECKINPAH	Armor, all weapons, and a "Get Out Of Jail Free" card.
URGE	All Cities Parts 1 & 2 except Vice City 2.
CAPRICE	All Cities Parts 1 and 2
INGLORIOUS	All Cities
HANGTHEDJ	All Cities, lots of money, all weapons and a parrot.
SKYBABIES	Partial Level Select to "Mandarin Mayhem"

EASY GURANGA

Go up to a group of Gurangas, or the groups of people making noise and following each other. Now, don't shoot them, but instead beat up the person in the front. If you beat him up enough, they will start following you almost anywhere. It's a good way to get a guranga with a machine gun, flame thrower, or other high powered weapon of death.

EASY TANK

On the first city, access second scene (Heist All Mighty.) When you start, run somebody over and wait for the ambulance. When it comes, nick it and drive to the army base, drive in and nick the tank.
NOTE: This only works with an ambulance or police car.

FREE CAR BOMBS

In San Andreas, the bomb shop on the southeast end of the Golden Gate bridge will rig your car for free. Enter it before you do anything, and the guy tells you you don't have enough money. But the car is rigged anyway! It might work on other shops but I haven't tried it. My use for this is to rig the car they start you off with, since it won't disappear when you leave it, and then get it when you want to use the car bomb.

GO THROUGH FENCES

When you find a fence you want to go through go find a truck or van (something you crawl under instead of over when you press R1). Align the truck so it is parallel with the fence. Get out and crawl under the truck towards the fence, you should come up on the other side.

PLAY ANY MUSIC CD WHILE PLAYING

After the game has finished loading, replace your GTA CD with your own music CD. Although you cannot really choose which track to listen to, by switching between Radio and Constant while paused, then unpausing it, the track changes.

TANK LOCATION

The Coordinates for the tank are 99,48 on the second part of the first city.

GRAND THEFT AUTO



HELPSTATION

PARASITE EVE

CHOCOBO CAMEO

After you've visited the museum the first time, go back to it on the map screen. As the helicopter view scrolls around the building, look at the banner.

THE CHRYSLER BUILDING BOSS STRATEGY CHEAT

Here's a GREAT tip for beating Original Eve at the top of the Chrysler Building: instead of using the Parasite Energy Liberate, which only does 1000-1200 HP of damage, try using Energy Shot. Yes, it's an old spell, but if your level is high enough (around Level 38-39), you'll do a whopping 3500-5000 HP of damage! This is GREAT for whittling down Original Eve's 45000 HP.

GET 60 ROUNDS OF BULLETS INGAME

On the first level, after you beat Eve on the Opera Stage, go backstage and you will see a hole. If you listen carefully at the hole you will hear sirens. Go back outside the Opera house and ask the cop on the far right for bullets. He will give you 60 rounds.

INFINITE BULLETS

In the NYPD, go directly downstairs and then enter the left door. You can find all of the bullets in the box near the counter. Get the box of bullets and go out to the New York map. Now return to that room for more bullets. Repeat as needed.

INFINITE MEDICINE

This trick is similar to the code for infinite bullets. In Day 3: Selection, after the battle in the NYPD #17th District where Torres will die and Wayne will take over for him. Whenever you end up leaving the precinct and come back, go visit the weapons room and check the chest to the top right. There will be a Medicine 2 or 3 waiting for you.

PARASITE EVE



LOTS OF TRADING CARDS

When you are at the hospital, just before you go to the 13th floor, find the room that has the nurse who is looking for more people who are hurt. Now go to the top of the room to the fallen cabinet and look behind it to find lots of trading cards. Make sure that you have room for them in your inventory.

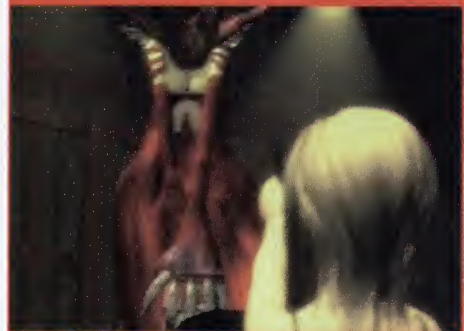
NORMAL AND SUPER TOOL KIT

When in the EX game, collect as many Rare Trading cards as is possible. If you ask Wayne to show you his Rare Trading card collection, he will give you tool kits at certain numbers. If you ask Wayne to show you his Rare Trading card collection AFTER you have given him 12 or so Rare Trading Cards, he will then give you a tool kit. It acts as an infinite amount of regular tools. If you give Wayne 14 or more Rare Trading cards, and ask him to show you he'll give you the Super Tool Kit. This acts as an infinite amount of Super Tools.

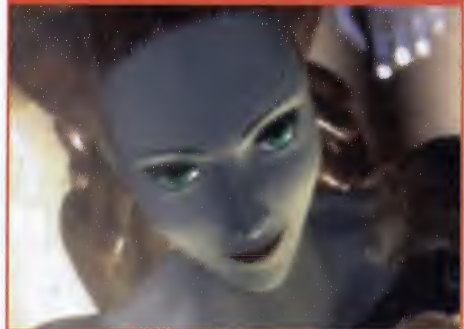
SECRET WEAPON IN MUSEUM

After you deactivate the alarm in the museum, head right (by pressing D-pad, Down-Right) and you will find a lift which can only go to 4th floor, and in this floor you will find a secret room with a few boxes in it.

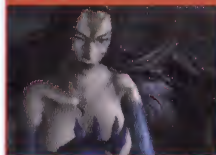
PARASITE EVE



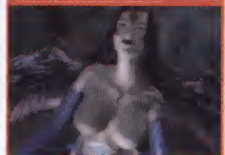
PARASITE EVE



PARASITE EVE



PARASITE EVE



HELPSTATION

PARASITE EVE



THE REAL ENDING

After you win you will be asked if you wish to save. Do so, then reinsert CD #1 and choose the EX game. You will now see the Chrysler Building on the Manhattan map. Go inside and make your way to the top to see the real enemy and ending.

TUNING UP THE ULTIMATE GUN

There are two Ultimate guns in Parasite Eve. The first one can be acquired when going through the regular game, while the other is only available in the EX mode. There are a few steps in getting this weapon.

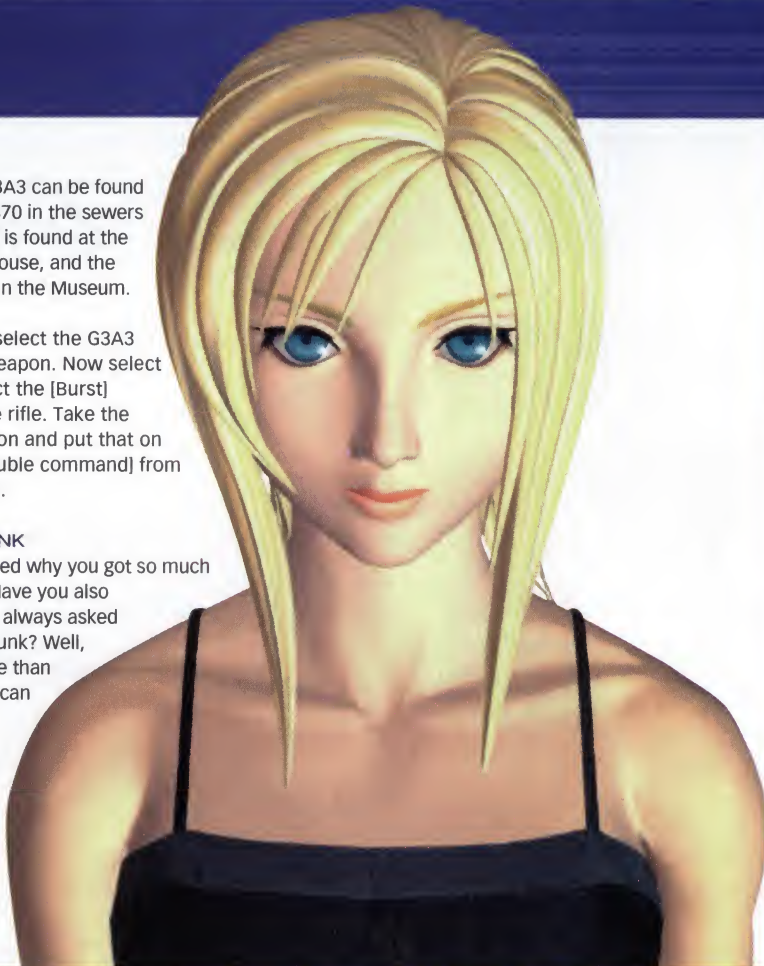
- You must get the G3A3 "Rifle", the M870 "Shotgun", the PPK "Pistol", and the M9 rev2 or the

M800 "Pistols". The G3A3 can be found in the Hospital, the M870 in the sewers of Chinatown, the PPK is found at the entrance of the warehouse, and the M8000 or M9rev2 are in the Museum.

- Use your tools and select the G3A3 rifle as the primary weapon. Now select the shotgun and select the [Burst] option to put it on the rifle. Take the PPKs [first strike] option and put that on the rifle. Take the [double command] from one of the two pistols.

WEAPONS FROM JUNK

Have you ever wondered why you got so much junk in Parasite Eve? Have you also wondered why Wayne always asked you to get rid of your junk? Well, if you give Wayne more than 300 pieces of junk, he can make some really AWESOME weapons from them. Just make sure that you TELL him what to make, instead of letting him decide himself because he screws up sometimes.



Cheats

Hotline !

* A large range of USA (NTSC) Titles

PlayStation

- 001 Ace Combat 2
- 002 Actua Soccer 2
- 003 Actua Soccer 3
- 004 Adidas Power Soccer
- 005 Advan racing
- 006 Alien Trilogy
- 007 Alone in the Dark 2
- 008 Andrei Racing
- 009 Ananias: Ten Pin 2
- 010 Apocalypse
- 011 Armoured Core
- 012 Armoured Core 2
- 013 Ayrton Senna Kart Duel
- 014 Assault Rigs
- 015 Assault: Retribution
- 016 Asteroids
- 017 Auto Destruct
- 018 Azure Dreams
- 019 B Movie
- 020 Battle Arena Tosh 3
- 021 Battle Arena Tosh 2
- 022 Beast Wars: Transform
- 023 Bio Freaks
- 024 Blast Chamber
- 025 Blast Radius
- 026 Blast
- 027 Blood Omen
- 028 Bloody Roar
- 029 Bomberman World
- 030 Brain Dead 13
- 031 Brigandine
- 032 Bubsy 3D
- 033 Bushido Blade 2
- 034 Bust-a-Groove
- 035 Bust-a-Move 4
- 036 C. Contra Adventure
- 037 Capcom Gen. 1
- 038 Capcom Gen. 2
- 039 Cardinal Sin
- 040 Cart World Series
- 041 Circuit Breakers
- 042 Code Name: Tenka
- 043 Collin McRae rally
- 044 Colonisation
- 045 Colony Wars

- 046 Colony Wars: Yeng.
- 047 Command & Conquer: Retal
- 048 Command & Conquer: Red
- 049 Contra: Legacy of War
- 050 Cool Boarders 2
- 051 Cool Boarders 3
- 052 Courier Crisis
- 053 Crash Bandicoot 1
- 054 Crash Bandicoot 2
- 055 Crash Bandicoot 3
- 056 Crime Killer
- 057 Croc: Legend
- 058 Crusader: No Remorse
- 059 Cybersled
- 060 Dark Forces
- 061 Dead or Alive
- 062 Death Trap Dungeon
- 063 Decent
- 064 Defcon 5
- 065 Destruction derby 2
- 066 Diablo
- 067 Die Hard Trilogy
- 068 Dragon Seeds
- 069 Duke Nukem: Time to Kill
- 070 Duke Nukem: Meltdown
- 071 Dynamite Boxing
- 072 Elemental Gearhilt
- 073 ESPN Extreme Games
- 074 Everybody's Golf
- 075 FIFA 98
- 076 FIFA 99
- 077 Fighting Force
- 078 Fighting Illusion: K1-Rev
- 079 Final Doom
- 080 Final Fantasy 7
- 081 Formula 1 97
- 082 Formula 1 98
- 083 Formula Karts
- 084 Forsaken
- 085 Frenzy
- 086 Futur Cop L.A.P.D.
- 087 G Darius
- 088 G Police
- 089 Gex: Enter the Gecko
- 090 Ghost in the Shell
- 091 Gran Turismo
- 092 Grand Theft Auto
- 093 Grand Tour Racing 98

- 094 Guilty Gear
- 095 Heart Of Darkness
- 096 Hot Shots Golf
- 097 I.S. Soccer Pro 98
- 098 Independence Day
- 099 Indy 500
- 100 J. McGrath Super X 98
- 101 Jet Moto 2
- 102 Judge Dredd
- 103 K-1 Arena Fighters
- 104 Kagoro Deception 2
- 105 Kiona
- 106 KnockOut Kings
- 107 Krazy Ivan
- 108 Kula World
- 109 Lihoro Grande
- 110 M.K. 4
- 111 M.K. Mythologies
- 112 M.K. Trilogy
- 113 Madden NFL 99
- 114 Madden NFL 98
- 115 Mass Destruction
- 116 Max Force
- 117 MDK
- 118 Medievil
- 119 Megaman Legends
- 120 Mervel S Hero's V's St. Fight
- 121 Metal Gear Solid
- 122 Metal Slug
- 123 Micro Machines V3
- 124 Monster Trucks
- 125 Moto Racer
- 126 Moto Racer 2
- 127 Motorhead
- 128 MTB Dirt Cross
- 129 N2O - Nitrous oxide
- 130 Nascar 98
- 131 Nascar 99
- 132 NBA Live 98
- 133 NBA Live 99
- 134 NBA Shoot Out 98
- 135 Need for Speed 2
- 136 Need for Speed 3
- 137 NFL Blitz
- 138 NFL Gameday 99
- 139 NFL 98
- 140 NHL 99
- 141 NHL Face Off 98

- 142 NHL Powerplay 98
- 143 Ninja: Shadows
- 144 Nuclear Strike
- 145 O.D.T.
- 146 Oddworld: Abe's Ex.
- 147 Oddworld: Abe's Odd.
- 148 One
- 149 Pandemonium 1
- 150 Pandemonium 2
- 151 Parasite Eve
- 152 Parrappa The Rapper
- 153 Pit Fall 3D
- 154 Pocket Fighter
- 155 Porsche Challenge
- 156 Poy Poy
- 157 Psychadeck
- 158 R-Type Delta
- 159 R-Types
- 160 Rally Cross
- 161 Rally Cross 2
- 162 Rally de Africa
- 163 Rapid Racer
- 164 Rayman
- 165 Rebel Assault 2
- 166 Rebel Assault
- 167 Resident Evil 2
- 168 Resident Evil: D.C.
- 169 Ridge Racer Rev.
- 170 Rival Schools
- 171 Riven: Sequel to Myst
- 172 Road Rash 3D
- 173 Rouse Trip: 2012
- 174 Running wild
- 175 SCARS
- 176 Shadow Master
- 177 Shane Warne 99
- 178 Side Pocket 3
- 179 Sim City 2000
- 180 Skull Monkeys
- 181 Small Soldiers
- 182 Smash Court 2
- 183 Soul Blade
- 184 Soviet Strike
- 185 Spice World
- 186 Spyro the Dragon
- 187 Star Wars: Masters Of The
- 188 Steel Rain

- 189 Street Fighter Alpha 3
- 190 Street Fighter Coll 2
- 191 Street Fighter X-Alpha
- 192 Street Racer
- 193 Tales of Destiny
- 194 Tekken 2
- 195 Tekken 3
- 196 Ten Pin Alley
- 197 Tenchu
- 198 Test Drive 4
- 199 Test Drive 5
- 200 Test Drive Off Road
- 201 Test Drive Off Road 2
- 202 Tetris Plus
- 203 The Fifth Element
- 204 The Lost World
- 205 The Unholy War
- 206 Theme Hospital
- 207 Theme Park
- 208 Thrill Kill
- 209 Thunder Force 5
- 210 Thunder Woods 99
- 211 Time Crisis
- 212 Tobal 2
- 213 Toca Touring Car
- 214 Toca Touring Car 2
- 215 Tokyo Highway Battle
- 216 Tomb Raider
- 217 Tomb Raider 2
- 218 Tomb Raider 3
- 219 Tombal
- 220 T. Makinen World Rally
- 221 Treasures of the Deep
- 222 Triple Play 98
- 223 Triple Play 99
- 224 Twisted Metal 2
- 225 Twisted Metal 3
- 226 V Rally
- 227 V's
- 228 Vigilante 8
- 229 VNX Racing
- 230 VR Powerboat Racin
- 231 War Games: Defcon 1
- 232 WarCraft 2
- 233 Warhammer
- 234 WCW Nitro
- 235 WCW/WWO Thunder
- 236 WCW V's The World

- 237 Wild 9
- 238 Wild Arms
- 239 Wipeout 2097
- 240 WWF In Your House
- 241 WWF War Zone
- 242 X-Men V's St. Fighter
- 243 Z

NG4

- 244 Aero Gauge
- 245 AllStar Baseball 99
- 246 Area Fighter Assault
- 247 Automobili Lamborghini
- 248 Banjo Kazooi
- 249 Bio Freaks
- 250 Body Harvest
- 251 Bomberman 64
- 252 Bomberman Hero
- 253 Buck Bumble
- 254 Bust-a-move 2
- 255 Chameleon Twist
- 256 Chopper Attack
- 257 Clay Fighter 63 1/3
- 258 Cruzzin USA
- 259 Dark Rift
- 260 Diddy Kong racing
- 261 Doom 64
- 262 Duke Nukem
- 263 Duke Nukem
- 264 Extreme G
- 265 Extreme G 2
- 266 F - Zero X
- 267 F1 Pole Position
- 268 F1 World Grand Prix
- 269 FIFA 98
- 270 Fighters Destruction
- 271 Forsaken
- 272 Gex
- 273 Golden Eye
- 274 Hexen
- 275 I.S. Soccer 64
- 276 ISS Pro 98
- 277 Iggy's Reckin' Ball
- 278 M.K. 4
- 279 M.K. Mythology's
- 280 M.K. Trilogy
- 281 Madden 99
- 282 Mario Kart 64s

- 281 Mission Impossible
- 282 Multi Racing Champ
- 283 Nagano Win Olympics
- 284 Nascar 99
- 285 NBA Hangtime
- 286 NBA in the Zone
- 287 NFL QB Club 99
- 288 NHL 99
- 289 NHL Breakaway 98
- 290 NHL Breakaway 99
- 291 Nightmare Creatures
- 292 Offroad Challenge
- 293 Quake 64
- 294 Quest 64
- 295 Rampage World Tour
- 296 Robotron X
- 297 S.C.A.R.S.
- 298 San Fran Rush
- 299 Snowboard Kids
- 300 SouthPark
- 301 Space Station: Silicon Valley
- 302 Star Wars: Rogue Squadron
- 303 Star Wars: Shadows
- 304 Super Mario 64
- 305 Tetrisphere
- 306 Top Gear Overdrive
- 307 Top Gear Rally
- 308 Turok
- 309 Turok 2
- 310 WarBods
- 311 Wano Gretski 3D 98
- 312 WCW / NWO Revenge
- 313 World Cup 98
- 314 Wipeout 64
- 315 WWF WarZone

DreamCast

- 316 Godzilla Generation
- 317 Pen Pen Tri-Icelon
- 318 7TH Cross
- 319 Sonic Adventure
- 320 Virtua Fighter 3TB

PlayStation (new)

- 321 Need for Speed: High Stakes
- 322 Rolloge
- 323 Rampage 2: Universal Tour
- 324 Contender

- 325 Gex 3: Deep Cover Gecko
- 326 Max Power Racing
- 327 Army Men 3D
- 328 Chocobo Racing
- 329 Dead in the Water
- 330 Fisherman's Galt: A Bass Challenge
- 331 Syphon Filter
- 332 Rugrats: Search For Reptar
- 333 Bloody Roar 2: Bringer Of The New Age
- 334 Silent Hill
- 335 Eliminator
- 336 Street Shor
- 337 LEGEND
- 338 Destruga
- 339 Akuli The Heartless
- 340 Military Madness

NG4 (new)

- 341 Rampage 2: Universal Tour
- 342 Mario Party
- 343 Vigilante 8
- 344 NBA Live '99
- 345 Twisted Edge Extreme Snowboarding
- 346 Rush 2: Extreme Racing USA
- 347 Castlevania
- 348 BattleTanx

DreamCast (new)

- 349 A-Lite
- 350 Aero Dancing
- 351 Blue Stinger
- 352 Daytona USA 2
- 353 Evolution
- 354 Get Bass
- 355 House of the Dead 2
- 356 Marvel Vs. Capcom
- 357 Psychic Force 2012
- 358 Power Stone
- 359 Puyo Puyo 4
- 360 Sega Rally 2
- 361 Super Speed Racing

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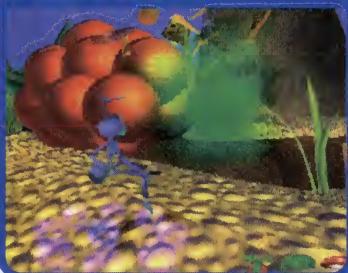
* 1.95 Per Min. Higher rate from Mobile or Public Phones

Over
300
Games

BUYER'S GUIDE

PlayStation magazine has formed the Buyer's Guide to give you, the reader, an idea about the games that have been released over recent months. Use this as a guide when buying your PlayStation Software!

A BUG'S LIFE

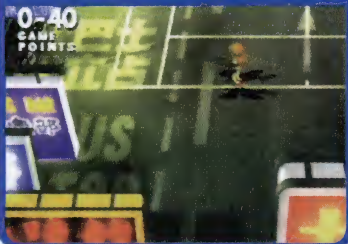


ABE'S EXODUS

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: 2D Platform
PRICE: \$89.95
SCORE: 9

The ruler of platforms returns in this sequel with gameplay/graphics to drool for. If you haven't experienced the splendour of Oddworld, check it out!

ANNA KOURNIKOVA TENNIS



A BUG'S LIFE

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: \$69.95
SCORE: 7

This free-roaming adventure is aimed at a younger market but can be appreciated by all. The colourful graphics are great, as is the rather innovative idea of having to grow plants in order to advance.

APE ESCAPE



ACTUA ICE HOCKEY

PUBLISHER: Gremlin
GENRE: Sports
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

Although not the best ice hockey sim for the PlayStation, it comes close to being king of the hill. Loads of options make up for the lack of official sponsorship.

ASTERIX



AFL '99

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Sports
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 7

A curious game which has commentary from Australia's own Bruce MacAvaney. Poor frame rate though.

BLOODY ROAR 2



AKUJI THE HEARTLESS

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: 3D adventure
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

A brooding journey into the depths of

Hell. You play Akuji, whose heart has been torn out by his brother. You must fight your way out of the bowels of Hades, using your huge knives and many spells to vanquish the evil pitfiends. An enjoyable 3D romp in the Underworld.

ANNA KOURNIKOVA TENNIS

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Tennis
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

A surprisingly deep tennis game with all the charm and playability of the first one with the same name. Cute characters and amusing animations breathe life into the stale sport of videogame tennis.

APE ESCAPE

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 10

A superb adventure for younger gamers, or anyone with an itch to go catch some monkeys. The first game to be exclusively used with a Dual Shock controller, it isn't even compatible with a standard controller at all. Colourful, action-packed and huge.

ASTERIX

PUBLISHER: Infogrames
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 6

While it is initially quite grabbing with its simple charm, Asterix will become one of those games you never play due to its short lifespan. You start with a portion of Gaul and aspire to recapture all of the European continent from Caesar.

BLOODY ROAR 2

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: 3D beat 'em up
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 9

An extremely fast fighter with very sharp

graphics that unfortunately doesn't really improve on the first game too much. Nonetheless, it is a great game and one for the collection of any fighting fanatic.

BUST A GROOVE

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Dancing
PRICE: \$69.95
SCORE: 8

The one and only dancing title for your PlayStation. Your head will swim at the sight of the silky smooth graphics and your booty will bounce to the beat of the tunes. Bust a Groove is guaranteed to please just about any crowd.

BUST-A-MOVE 4

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Puzzle
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

This cult puzzling game is one of the best in the series, offering various new characters, new special attacks, pulleys, and a variety of mind-bending puzzles. Not much of an improvement over the prequels, though.

CIVILIZATION 2

PUBLISHER: Human
GENRE: Simulation
PRICE: \$69.95
SCORE: 5

Although not as fast as some PC versions, Civilization 2 offers gamers an incredibly deep civilisation simulation for those who like to play their games for hours, amassing armies and playing god.

CONSTRUCTOR

PUBLISHER: Acclaim
GENRE: City sim
PRICE: \$89.95
SCORE: 7

Sim City with mobsters! If you're a fan of the population simulation, this one's quite involved. Make sure you've got a spare memory card - it uses fifteen blocks!

CRASH BANDICOOT: WARPED

PUBLISHER: Universal Interactive
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: \$69.95
SCORE: 10

The best reached a glorious climax with this beautiful game. Go scuba diving, fly, ride the tiger, hoon on a motorbike, pilot a spaceship and surf on a jetski!

DARKSTALKERS 3

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: 2D Fighting
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

Capcom's culmination of 2D beat em ups is a treat for the eyes and a challenge for your thumbs. Rapid gameplay, cool character design, customisable combos and ample super moves make it great.

DEVIL DICE

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Puzzle
PRICE: \$59.95
SCORE: 8

The king of puzzlers. Devil Dice features a couple of riveting single player modes and a frantic five player war as well.

DREAMS

PUBLISHER: Cryo
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 4

A mediocre platform-based action game that falls below many of the accepted standards that have been set by games like Spyro and MediEvil. Going in its favour are cool FMV scenes, but that's it.

EVIL ZONE

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Fighting
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 9

Flashy graphics and camera work make this the fastest fighting game for the PSX. Control is utterly simplistic so it is easy to get into. Has a strong anime style.

FIFA '99

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Soccer
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 9

FIFA '99 is the best soccer game that is available for the PlayStation, bar none.

GEX 3: DEEP COVER GECKO

PUBLISHER: Eidos
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 9

The third Gex game is similar to the second, full of wisecracks and humorous takes on modern life. A sprawling 3D platformer that uses the same graphics engine as Soul Reaver. It's bound to last a very long time.

GLOBAL DOMINATION

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 7

Remember Nuclear War back in the 80s? Well, it's basically the same thing, except in 3D. That is, a quirky strategy title with simple point and click controls. Not the greatest, but a good laugh.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: LONDON

PUBLISHER: Take2 Interactive
GENRE: Criminal acts
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 9

A splendid add-on mission pack that carries through Grand Theft Auto's tradition of ignoring the law in a big city. Plenty of "you're nicked," "no messin arand," and "cor blimey!" type language to suit the times.

GUARDIAN'S CRUSADE

PUBLISHER: Activision
GENRE: RPG
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

An RPG for younger gamers, GC will not take you too long to complete. It's winning feature is the baby you have to return to its parents which can morph into all manner of weapons in battle.

KENSEI: SACRED FIST

PUBLISHER: Konami
GENRE: Fighting
PRICE: \$89.95
SCORE: 7

A 3D fighter which tries out some new ideas and employs full freedom of movement, but fails somewhat in in-body fluidity. Like a stiff Tekken with a superior blocking system.

MADDEN NFL '99

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Gridiron
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 9

Madden '99 is easily the best gridiron simulation game on the PlayStation. The playbook is much larger, and the use of fully polygonal players is a huge plus. Presentation aside, however, the thing that sets Madden apart from the rest is its excellent AI, which no other game has been able to match.

METAL GEAR SOLID

PUBLISHER: Konami
GENRE: Tactical action
PRICE: \$99.95
SCORE: 10

If you haven't heard of this, where have you been? Probably the PSX's biggest name yet, MGS is sub-titled Tactical Espionage Action, and it is just that. As an old spy dragged out of retirement for a mission the world depends upon, you must break into high-tech installations and rescue hostages using whatever you can find to help you out. White-knuckle James Bond stuff!

MONACO GP 2

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: \$89.95
SCORE: 8

Arguably the best formula 1 racing game on the PlayStation, Monaco GP 2 offers gamers an excellent mix of graphics, sound and realistic gameplay that features arcade mode for beginners and simulation mode for experts. This one comes highly recommended.

MONKEY HERO

PUBLISHER: Take 2
GENRE: Adventure
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 5

Monkey Hero is targeted at a very young audience, but we fear that toddlers may be disappointed by the clunky graphics and stilted gameplay. It follows the same Chinese fable as Monkey Magic.

MOTO RACER 2

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Motorbikes
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 9

DARKSTALKERS 3



EVIL ZONE



GRAND THEFT AUTO: LONDON



KENSEI: SACRED FIST



METAL GEAR SOLID



MONKEY HERO



MUCHO



A good effort in topping the first game, Moto Racer 2 has got the same formula for some fast fun. There is a range of street and dirt bikes, and a track editor for hours of really cool road-making.

MUCHO

PUBLISHER: Titus
GENRE: 3D puzzle adventure
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

Mucho has you wandering around a labyrinth, collecting treasures and avoiding enemies. It is a thoughtful game based on the grid network you are trapped in, which you can alter slightly at any time.

MUSIC

PUBLISHER: Codemasters
GENRE: Music maker
PRICE: \$79.95

MUSIC



NEED FOR SPEED 4



No score was granted this game as we couldn't actually see it as a game. It is a music program which allows you to create your own music tracks and save them to the memory card. Thousands of samples, beats and riffs to choose from.

NBA LIVE '99

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Basketball
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 9

The best basketball game of all time, NBA Live '99 has everything a b'ball fan needs in a videogame. The graphics and gameplay have improved from NBA Live '98, and the depth of stats is incredible. The players smile from time to time.

NEED FOR SPEED 4

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: \$89.95
SCORE: 8

The best game in the series, NFS4 offers great additions, including an excellent 3D engine and the ability to play as the police. Australian cars, like Holdens and Fords, give the game a personal touch and make it well worth a look.

RIDGE RACER TYPE 4



ROLLCAGE



NFL BLITZ

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Gridiron
PRICE: \$69.95
SCORE: 8

NFL Blitz is to gridiron as NBA Jam was to basketball. Best described as gridiron

on acid, this game brings all the game to life with some of the most punishing hits and tackles seen in any football game. Top fun for everyone, even if you know nothing about the game.

NHL '99

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Ice hockey
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 9

The slickest ice hockey title available on the PlayStation. Bear in mind it follows EA's law of realism, so there is definitely plenty of violence in this game...

POCKET FIGHTER

PUBLISHER: Capcom
GENRE: 2D Fighting
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

A cute version of the SF series. Deformed versions of your favourite characters engage in surreal combat. Some combos are hilarious, like the one where Chun-Li attacks with a wave of cyclists, or the one in which Zangief sits and forces his opponent to cook him breakfast!

POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

Play God in this fully 3D civilisation simulation. It remains much the same as all of the other Populous titles were, but tweaked in the name of PSX playability.

POY POY 2

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Party game
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

With a multitap this game can't be beat. All you have to do is throw some rocks and other dangerous articles at your varied competitors in a small arena. That's basically the aim of the game! There is a good sense of humour in this that makes for a great fun game.

PREMIER MANAGER '98

PUBLISHER: Gremlin Interactive
GENRE: Soccer
PRICE: \$69.95
SCORE: 8

This game is really a soccer game, but you don't play the sport. Instead you

take the role of coach, scouting for talent, assembling a team and training them to perfection.

PRO 18 WORLD TOUR GOLF

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
GENRE: Golf
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 7

The real professional players were filmed taking swings, so that aspect of the game looks absolutely spectacular. However, there isn't anything else here to separate it from others in the genre. Try Everybody's Golf instead.

PSYBADEK

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
GENRE: Hoverboarding
PRICE: \$49.95
SCORE: 9

Virtually no plot fades into insignificance next to smooth gameplay. This is a game to chill out to as it concentrates on half-pipes and fun. Has loads of colourful stunts and the music's funky.

RAMPAGE UNIVERSAL TOUR

PUBLISHER: Midway
GENRE: 2D Retro Arcade
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

This version of the 80s classic gives life to the Godzilla inside us all. Playing as a sixty-foot monster, your aim is to raze buildings and eat people (with three player capability to boot!).

RIDGE RACER TYPE 4

PUBLISHER: Namco
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

The fourth Namco driving game was too easy to be considered an upgrade in the series. The JogCon peripheral brings it to life with its G-force feedback, making it harder to steer around fast corners. Even with the larger range of cars, excellent visuals and music, it still falls below the standards of Gran Turismo.

ROLLCAGE

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
GENRE: Racing
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 9

'No rules racing'. In the future, cars are created with the ability to flip onto their

roof and keep driving. Add to that to a host of diabolical weapons, hidden routes on every track and circuit scenery and you have Rollcage. An amazing game

R TYPE DELTA

PUBLISHER: Virgin Interactive
GENRE: Scrolling shooter
PRICE: \$89.95
SCORE: 9

One of the best scrolling shooters for PlayStation, R-Type has multi-layered 3D backgrounds and more enemies than you could fire a laser at. Sadly there is no two player option to be seen

RUGRATS

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Multi-format
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

Rugrats is possibly the best choice around at the moment for the young gamers. It also features a variety of different minigames that are simple and enjoyable as well. The game is presented colourfully and is hugely enjoyable as long as you're young at heart.

RUNNING WILD

PUBLISHER: Universal
GENRE: Racing
PRICE: \$69.95
SCORE: 6

Running Wild is a crazy little racing game in which the players (up to four in a race) control a bunch of upright animals that are running around a track. The graphics are a little bit blocky but with friends, this game's a ball.

S.C.A.R.S.

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
GENRE: Racing
PRICE: \$29.95
SCORE: 7

A jovial racing game with silly-looking cars based on different animals and plenty of childish weaponry. Bright and colourful and smooth as well, S.C.A.R.S. will entertain for months. It's especially good with a multitap and a few friends.

SHANE WARNE CRICKET

PUBLISHER: Sega-Ozisoft
GENRE: Cricket
PRICE: \$89.95
SCORE: 9

Winner of the Network Interactive

Games and Movies Awards - PlayStation Game of the Year, because it was the first cricket game available. Still, it's remarkably close to the real thing

SILENT HILL

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Horror adventure
PRICE: \$89.95
SCORE: 8

An epic and truly petrifying thriller with astounding cinematography, SH is let down by its poor cast of weak characters and lack of direction in the plot. Still, it is in a field all its own and it is guaranteed to deliver many shivers for those who want to wet their pants

SMALL SOLDIERS

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 6

A lousy effort with little atmosphere and no dangling carrot. Unless you LOVED the film, don't bother checking this out.

SOUL REAVER

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: 3D RPG/Adventure
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 9

A dark, gothic tale of the supernatural, you play Raziel, an ex-vampire turned soul reaver. Your vast task is to rid the realm of Nosgoth of all sixty-thousand of the undead that plague the land. Huge, with great graphics and a cool story.

SPYRO THE DRAGON

PUBLISHER: Universal Interactive
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

Brilliant! A game for all ages, Spyro is set in sprawling 3D worlds with no set paths (the only real failing of Crash Bandicoot). Breathe fire on your foes and headbutt them into next week as the world's most underestimated infant, Spyro the Dragon. Dead easy to start with and difficult at the end, everyone will dig it, believe us.

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3

PUBLISHER: Capcom
GENRE: 2D Fighting
PRICE: \$99.95
SCORE: 9

There are 32 characters, 3 new fighting

modes and only five hundred copies in Australasian territories. Easily one of the best 2D fighting game for the PlayStation. Lacks the visual punch of Tekken 3, but hard-core fans will find it the best fighting action on the console

SYPHON FILTER

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Tactical Espionage
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 9

Syphon Filter is the game for all you guys who were left wanting more after Metal Gear Solid. It's viewed over the shoulder, like Tomb Raider, but it has much better controls and heaps of weaponry to play with. It could be called the PlayStation's Goldeneye, but it is slightly different in cinematography and plot. Action packed spy-like stuff

T'AI FU

PUBLISHER: Activision
GENRE: Fighting adventure
PRICE: \$69.95
SCORE: 7

T'ai Fu is a game about a tiger who likes to go around ancient China beating up various animals. The 3D environments are rather nice and there are hundreds of combos to be learnt throughout the course of the game.

TENCHU: STEALTH ASSASSINS

PUBLISHER: Activision
GENRE: Adventure
PRICE: \$89.95
SCORE: 8

Worthy of a much higher score due to its originality, Tenchu: Stealth Assassins puts you in the soft-soled boots of a ninja in feudal Japan. With all of the odds completely against you, you must learn to exercise your stealth and cunning to assassinate your foes without any detection. Tenchu is basically gripping, so very gripping.

TEST DRIVE 5

PUBLISHER: Accolade
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 7

The best Test Drive game features a Sydney, Australia course, complete with the Imax theatre, the Governor-General's house, the Art Gallery, the Harbour Bridge, the Anzac War Memorial and the Opera House. Other worldly tracks have scored the same attention to detail as our beloved Sydney.

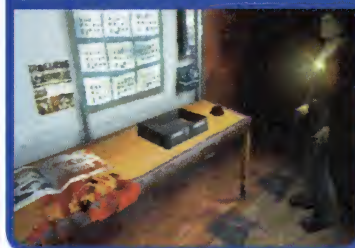
RUGRATS



SHANE WARNE CRICKET



SILENT HILL



SOUL REAVER



SYPHON FILTER



T'AI FU



TOCA 2



TIGER WOODS '99

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Golf
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

EA has come up with a fine golf game for those who take the sport very seriously. In Tiger Woods '99, the camera follows the ball, giving you a real feel for the course. You can even use the multitap with this game for some four player fun.

UM JAMMER LAMMY



TOCA 2

PUBLISHER: Codemasters
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: \$89.95
SCORE: 9

The best just got better with this sequel. The tracks are identical to the real ones, as are the numerous cars. If you liked TOCA, you will die for TOCA 2. This is your chance to drive a Formula Ford.

V RALLY 2



TOMB RAIDER III

PUBLISHER: Eidos
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: \$89.95
SCORE: 9

Lara's tradition lives on in this huge third installation to the series. It will take anyone ages to finish this. The game has been made harder than the first two Raiders so Lara lovers won't finish it too quick. Improvements include smarter enemies, triangular scenery, rounder boobs, and a new crawling technique that shows off her body! A bonus is the ability to use thumbsticks to move and look in different directions.

WARZONE 2100



TRAP RUNNER

PUBLISHER: Atlus
GENRE: Strategic combat
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

Trap Runner has no equal. It's a fighting game with stealth elements in which multiple characters in an enclosed area must set traps in order to eliminate each other. Like a flashy version of the old 'Spy vs Spy' on the Commodore 64, with a plot involving secret agents as well!

WING OVER 2



TRIPLE PLAY 2000

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Baseball
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 9

Terrific graphics and splendid gameplay make Triple Play 2000 the only choice for

you if you want to add a baseball sim to your PlayStation collection.

UEFA CHAMPIONS

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

A four player game with remarkable attention to detail, UEFA Champions League has got some excellent graphics and lighting effects. The AI is also above average and it goes to show how much effort went into this highly polished title.

UM JAMMER LAMMY

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Rhythm/Dance
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 9

The splendid sequel to Parappa has about thrice the songs, plus extra modes for two player rapping and jamming action. If you never discovered Parappa, go out and discover Lammy now.

UNHOLY WAR

PUBLISHER: Eidos
GENRE: Strategic fighting
PRICE: \$89.95
SCORE: 7

There are two sides to this war, each with a bunch of wildly different fighters. An unconventional fighting game with streaks of strategy. Half played out on a hexagonal grid like chess and half in specific arenas. You'll never become sick of it as there's so much to try out.

V RALLY 2

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Rally racing
PRICE: \$89.95
SCORE: 10

The fastest rally racer on the PSX, VR2 creams Colin McRae, Rally Cross and its own prequel. A comprehensive track editor adds countless circuits to the already whopping 92 available, and there are all the upgrade and set-up options you could shake an oil stick at.

WARZONE 2100

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: 3D real time strategy
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 8

An excellent attempt at the impossible - a 3D RTS on the PlayStation. Tweaked to

match the PC counterpart in PlayStation playability, it has a forboding storyline to back up an incredibly deep and long lasting game. The final result is surprisingly good. Great for war-heads.

WILD ARMS

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: RPG
PRICE: \$59.95
SCORE: 8

An enormous RPG in which the player controls three youngsters and guides them toward their destiny. Turn-based combat, truckloads of spells and weapons and an engrossing storyline make this one a must for fans of the traditional 2D RPG.

WING OVER 2

PUBLISHER: Metro/JVC
GENRE: Flight sim
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 7

Wing Over 2 is an average flying game with less than attractive visuals. It is only saved by its progressive layout which forces the player to pass exams in order to get jobs, then money. This is only for flight simulation freaks - everyone else should avoid.

WIPEOUT 2097 PLATINUM

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
GENRE: Futuristic Racing
PRICE: \$39.95
SCORE: 10

This is the best anti-gravity racing game ever made and it is no longer in production, so we thought that we'd plug it in our Buyer's Guide. If you see it, get it. To this day, its graphics are still a benchmark being followed by PlayStation developers worldwide. You fly around winding kalaedoscopic tracks in the distant future. Worth it for the CD playable soundtrack alone, featuring Underworld, The Chemical Brothers, and The Future Sound of London! They're mad to can this. Buy it! Now!

YO YO'S PUZZLE PARK

PUBLISHER: Metro/JVC
GENRE: Puzzle
PRICE: \$79.95
SCORE: 7

Who remembers the old platform classic, Snow Bros. in the arcades? This is practically the same thing, but much cuter, if you can imagine such a concept. Designed primarily to be a party game, this game is great fun in two player mode.

ON THE DEMO CD



GEX 3: DEEP COVER GECKO

This rolling demonstration of Gex's third PSX outing gives a good example of the different styles of gameplay on offer. We see him prowling around as Gex Holmes, super sleuth.

We see him on the back of a camel trying to ignore the discomfort. We see him piloting his own little UFO in a futuristic stage. We even see him driving a tank, and having a real blast!



MICHAEL OWENS WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '99

This is one of the finest soccer sims available. It has superb graphics, smooth gameplay and loads of atmosphere provided by the fake crowd. The lighting effects are something to look out for as well. There are many camera angles to choose from in this demo. *World League Soccer* is analogue compatible, too.

CONTROLS:

X	Low pass/slide tackle
□	Kick/header/tackle
○	Shot/volley
△	Control/through ball
L1	Sprint/tap ball
L2	Scanner quick view
R1	Mode 2
R2	Cam quick view



ON THE DEMO CD



S.C.A.R.S.

The PlayStation's first four player racing game with weapons is brought to colourful life with cartoonish vehicle designs and outlandish trackside scenery. If you can manage to come first using the clunky car provided in this demo, you must have used the missiles and magnet bombs!

CONTROLS:

- X Go
- Brake
- △ View change
- Headlights
- L1 Jump
- L2 Look backwards
- R1 Shoot
- R2 Change weapon



MAX POWER RACING

Although not the best driving game around, *Max Power Racing* has a decent off-road feel and it will require some skill to come first in this demo. Driving into the creek is always a good bit of fun.

NOTE: you can toggle the controls in the General Options menu to be analogue compatible for both steering and accelerating.



CONTROLS:

- X Go
- Brake/reverse
- △ View change
- L2 Gear down
- R1 Handbrake
- R2 Gear up

SHADOW GUNNER

We gave it seven out of ten last year, but *Shadow Gunner* is by no means a bad game. This single level demo places you in the middle of about a hundred angry mechs and about twenty explosive cargo containers. Be wary of them blowing up and injuring you when they cop too much loose lead. Your aim is to survive.

CONTROLS:

- X Shoot
- △ Hit
- Mortar
- Slide
- L1 Dodge left
- L2 Lock on
- R1 Dodge right



PLAYER MANAGER SEASON 98-99

Yeah, yeah, it's a bit late, but now you can finally playtest *Player Manager* for yourself to see whether it really is the game for you. As you'll soon discover, there are so very many statistical options to wade through that even this demo should easily last you until Christmas, possibly in one sitting!

CONTROLS:

- X Does things



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Colin McRae Rally

METAL GEAR SOLID

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